

THE VARIANT READINGS OF THE QUR'ĀN:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF THEIR  
HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC  
ORIGINS

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*Dedication*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

To the soul of my beloved father, the man who filled me with his devotion to the Qur'ān, and enlightened me with his wisdom and wide knowledge in spreading the message of the Qur'ān, the ever preserved word of God:

"We have, without doubt,  
Sent down the Message,  
And We will assuredly  
Guard it (from corruption)."

(S.XV, 9)

The death of my father was a great loss to me, as in his precious and spiritual company I lived the most beautiful days of my life. Indeed to me he was a father, a shaykh, an excellent example for me to follow, a friend and

ولى فيه أستاذ ولى فيه مرشد  
ولى فيه قطب ذواتصال ولى ولى

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own composition.

A.A.M. ‘Abd Allāh

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgement	vii
System of Transliteration	ix
Abbreviations	x
Abstract	xvii
Introduction	xix
Chapter 1	
REVELATION OF THE <u>QUR'ĀN</u> IN SEVEN <u>AHRUF</u>	1
The meaning of seven <u>ahruf</u> in the <u>aḥādīth</u>	7
Meaning of <u>ahruf</u> in the Arabic Language	10
The interpretation of 'Seven <u>ahruf</u> '	12
Chapter 2	
COMPILATION OF THE <u>QUR'ĀN</u>	32
Compilation of the <u>Qur'ān</u> during the reigns of Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup> Uthmān	35
Methods adopted in this compilation	39
The materials of inscriptions of the <u>Qur'ān</u>	43
The sending of the <u>maṣāḥif</u> to the provinces	45
The dating of the compilation of the <u>Qur'ān</u> in the reign of <sup>C</sup> Uthmān	49
The validity of Abū Bakr's compilation	54
The number of <u>Qur'rā'</u> slain	58
The compilation and arrangement of verses in their <u>sūras</u>	66
The problem of missing verses	69
The meaning of the term <u>jam<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān</u>	73



Theory of <u>naskh</u>	78
The Shī <sup>C</sup> ite opinions on the alteration of the <u>Qur'ān</u>	90
Chapter 3	
THE DEVELOPMENT OF <u>ḤUTHMĀNIC MASĀHIF</u>	103
The <u>masāhif</u> and their relation to the <u>ahruf</u>	103
Orthography of the <u>masāhif</u>	106
Chapter 4	
THE <u>ḤUTHMĀNIC MASĀHIF</u> AND THE PERSONAL CODICES OF THE COMPANIONS AND SUCCESSORS	122
Differences between the <u>masāhif</u> of the <u>amsār</u>	134
Chapter 5	
THE LANGUAGE OF THE <u>QUR'ĀN</u>	140
Chapter 6	
THE ORIGIN OF THE QIRĀ'ĀT	179
The development of the conditions for accepted readings	186
The kinds of readings	196
The successive and anomalous readings	201
Definition of <u>shādhah</u>	207
Development of the concept of <u>shādhah</u>	210
The relationship between the <u>Qirā'āt</u> and the <u>Qur'ān</u>	212
The compilation of <u>Qirā'āt</u> and the earliest compilers	213

## Chapter 7

IKHTIYĀR IN THE QIRĀ'AH AND ITS BASES	220
Refutation of free exercise of choice in selection of readings	223
The <sup>c</sup> Uthmānic masāhif and the problem of grammatical or orthographical errors	249
CONCLUSION	267
BIBLIOGRAPHY	274

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Hence I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Michael

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## SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

The system of transliteration adopted here is that recommended by the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, with the following slight modifications:

1. Tā' marbūṭah is rendered "-ah"
2. The alif of the definite article is always retained.

In passages from the Qur'ān where the precise pronunciation of the text is relevant to the discussion such features as i<sup>c</sup>rāb, idghām, etc. have also been indicated.

Transliterated forms of Arabic geographical terms have in general been preferred to Anglicised forms, e.g. Makkah not Mecca, with the exception of the bibliography.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qurān - Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān  
wa-Ma<sup>C</sup>ālimum wa-Ādābuh

al-Awā'il - al-<sup>C</sup>Askarī : al-Awā'il

al-Bahr al-Muḥīt - Abū Ḥayyān, Tafsīr al-Bahr al-Muḥīt

Bayān - al-Khū'ī, al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah - Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah  
fī al-Tārīkh

al-Budūr al-Zāhirah - al-Qādī, al-Budūr al-Zāhirah fī al-Qirā'āt  
al-<sup>C</sup>Asr al-Mutawātirah Min Tarīqay al-Shāṭibiyyah wa-al-Durri

Bulūgh al-Amānī - al-Bannā: Bulūgh al-Amānī Min Asrār al-Fath  
al-Rabbānī

Bukhārī, al-Bukhārī, al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> al-Ṣaḥīḥ, or Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Burhān - al-Zarkashī, al-Burhān fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān

Concluding Essay - Jeffery, Concluding Essay on the Materials  
for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān

Dayf, al-<sup>C</sup>Asr al-Jāhilī - Dayf, Tārīkh al-Adab al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, al-<sup>C</sup>Asr  
al-Jāhilī

Dhawq al-Ḥalāwah - al-Ghamarī, Dhawq al-Ḥalāwah bi-Bayān Imtinā<sup>C</sup>  
Naskh al-Tilāwah

Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Khaṭṭ al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī - al-Munajjid, Dirāsāt fī  
Tārīkh al-Khaṭṭ al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī Mundh Bidāyatih Ilā Nihāyat al-<sup>C</sup>Asr  
al-Umawī

E.I.<sup>1</sup>, E.I.<sup>2</sup> - Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st and 2nd edition.

Fatāwā - Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū<sup>C</sup> Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah

Fath al-Bārī - Ibn Hajar al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī, Fath al-Bārī bi-sharḥ  
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

al-Fihrist - al-Nadīm, Kitāb al-Fihrist

Fück, al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah - Fück, al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah Dirāsāt Fī al-Lahajāt  
wa-al-Asālīb

Funūn al-Afnān - Ibn al-Jawzī, Funūn al-Afnān fī <sup>C</sup>Uyūn <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān

Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān - al-Nīsābūrī, Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān  
wa-Raghā'ib al-Furqān

Ghāyat al-Nihāyah - Ibn al-Jazarī, Ghāyat al-Nihāyah fī  
Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā' Dhawī al-Dirāyah

Ghayth al-Naf<sup>C</sup> - al-Ṣafāqisī, Ghayth al-Naf<sup>C</sup> fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C</sup>  
al-Hākīm - al-Hākīm, al-Mustadrak <sup>C</sup>Alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn

Ibānah, al-Qaysī, al-Ibānah <sup>C</sup>An Ma<sup>C</sup>āni al-Qirā'āt

Īdāḥ - Ibn al-Anbārī, Kitāb Īdāḥ al-waqf wa-al-Ibtidā' fī  
Kitāb Allāh <sup>C</sup>Azza wa-jall

Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr - Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-<sup>C</sup>Azīm

Ibrāz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī - Abū Shāmah: Ibrāz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī Min Ḥirz al-Amānī

al-<sup>C</sup>Iqd al-Farīd - Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd Rabbih, al-<sup>C</sup>Iqd al-Farīd

al-Iqtirāḥ - al-Suyūṭī, al-Iqtirāḥ fī Uṣūl al-Nahw

Irshād al-Sārī - al-Qaṣṭallānī, Irshād al-Sārī bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ  
al-Bukhārī

al-Istī<sup>C</sup>āb - Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr, al-Istī<sup>C</sup>āb fī Ma<sup>C</sup>rifat al-Aṣḥāb

Ithāf - al-Dimyātī, Ithāf fuḍalā' al-Bashar bi-Qirā'āt al-Arba<sup>C</sup>at  
<sup>C</sup>Ashar

Itqān - al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān

al-Kalimāt al-Ḥisān - al-Muṭī<sup>C</sup>ī, al-Kalimāt al-Ḥisān fī  
al-Ḥurūf al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah wa-Jam<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān

al-Kāmil - Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh

Kanz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī - al-Ja<sup>C</sup>buri, Kanz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī fī Sharḥ Ḥirz  
al-Amānī wa-Wajh al-Tahānī

Kashf al-Zunūn - Ḥajjī Khalīfah, Kashf al-Zunūn ʿAn Asāmī  
al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn

al-Kashshāf - al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf ʿAn Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmid  
al-Tanzīl wa ʿUyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl

Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah - Ibn Mujāhid, Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah fī al-Qirā'āt

Kitāb al-Zīnah - al-Rāzī, Kitāb al-Zīnah fī al-Kalimāt al-Islāmiyyah  
al-ʿArabiyyah

Khizānat al-Adab - al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Khizānat al-Adab  
wa-Lubb Lubāb Lisān al-ʿArab

al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān - al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān al-Karīm  
wa-Gharā'ib Rasmiḥ wa Hukmiḥ

Lane - Lane, Madd al-Qāmūs, Arabic-English Lexicon

Laṭā'if, al-Qaṣṭallānī, Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt li-Funūn al-Qirā'āt

Lisān al-ʿArab - Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab

Mabānī Anon., ed. Jeffery, Kitāb al-Mabānī fī Nazm al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī

See Jeffery, Muqaddimatān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān

Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Masāḥif, -al-Nur, Yusuf Ibrāhīm, Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Masāḥif

al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Goldziher, (Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung),  
al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Trans. by ʿAlī Hasan ʿAbd al-Qādir



Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī - Goldziher, (Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung), Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, Trans. by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Halīm al-Najjār.

Madrasat al-Kūfah - al-Makhzūmī, Madrasat al-Kūfah wa-Manhajuhā fī Dirāsāt al-Lughah wa-al-Nahw

Mafātīh al-Ghayb - al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb

Manāhil - al-Zurqānī, Manāhil al-<sup>C</sup>Irfān fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān

Marātib al-Nahwiyyīn - al-Halabī, Marātib al-Nahwiyyīn

Ma<sup>C</sup>rifat al-Qurrā' al-Kibār - al-Dhahabī, Ma<sup>C</sup>rifat al-Qurrā' al-Kibār <sup>C</sup>Alā al-Ṭabaqāt wa-al-A<sup>C</sup>ṣār

al-Maṣāḥif - Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif

Materials - Jeffery, Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān

Miftāḥ al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah - Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, Miftāḥ al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Siyādah fī Mawḍū<sup>C</sup>āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ulūm

al-Muhadhdhab, Muhaysin, al-Muhadhdhab fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr wa-Tawjīhuhā Min Lughat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab

al-Muharrar al-Wajīz - Abū Shāmah, al-Murshid al-Wajīz Ilā <sup>C</sup>Ulūm Tata<sup>C</sup>allaq bi-al-Kitāb al-<sup>C</sup>Azīz

al-Muḥkam - al-Dānī, al-Muḥkam fī Naqt al-Maṣāḥif

al-Muḥtasib - Ibn Jinnī, al-Muḥtasib fī Tabyīn Wujūh Shawādh al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Īdāḥ <sup>C</sup>Anhā

Mu<sup>C</sup>jam Mā Ista<sup>C</sup>jam, al-Bakrī, Mu<sup>C</sup>jam Mā Ista<sup>C</sup>jam Min Asmā' al-Bilād wa-al-Mawādi<sup>C</sup>

Mukhtaṣar - Ibn Khālawayh, al-Mukhtaṣar fī Shawādh al-Qirā'āt

Munjid - Ibn al-Jazarī, Munjid al-Muqri'īn wa-Murshid al-Ṭālibīn

Muqaddimatān - ed. Jeffery, Muqaddimatān fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān

al-Muqni<sup>C</sup> - al-Dānī, al-Muqni<sup>C</sup> fī Rasm Maṣāḥif al-Amsār

Mushkil Āthār - al-Ṭahāwī, Mushkil al-Āthār

Muslim - Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, or al-Jāmic al-Ṣaḥīḥ

Musnad - Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad

al-Mustasfā - al-Ghazzālī, al-Mustasfā Min <sup>C</sup>Ilm al-Uṣūl

al-Muzhir - al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir fī al-Lughah wa-Anwā<sup>C</sup>iha

al-Naqd al-Taḥlīlī - al-Ghamrāwī, al-Naqd al-Taḥlīlī li-Kitāb  
fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī

al-Nasā'ī - al-Nasā'ī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, al-Mujtabā

Nashr - Ibn al-Jazarī, al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr

al-Naskh fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm - Abū Zayd: al-Naskh fī al-Qur'ān  
al-Karīm, Dirāsah Tashrī<sup>C</sup>yyah Tārīkhiyyah Naqdiyyah

Nihāyah, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa-al-Athar

Nukat al-Intiṣār - Ibn al-Bāqillāni, Nukat al-Intiṣār li-Naql  
Maṣāḥif al-Amsār

Qāmūs - al-Fayrūzābādī, al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt

al-Qirā'āt al-Mashhūrah - Ibn Hazm, al-Qirā'āt al-Mashhūrah fī  
al-Amsār al-Ātiyah Majī<sup>C</sup> al-Tawātur

Qurtubī - al-Qurtubī, al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān

Al-Rawḍ al-Unuf - al-Suhaylī, al-Rawḍ al-Unuf fī Sharḥ al-Sīrah  
al-Nabawiyyah li-Ibn Hishām

al-Riyād al-Mustatābah - al-<sup>C</sup>Āmirī: al-Riyād al-Mustatābah fī  
Jumlat Man Rawā fī al-Ṣaḥīḥayn min al-Ṣaḥābah

Rūḥ al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī - al-Alūsī, Rūḥ al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān  
al-Azīm wa-al-Sab<sup>C</sup> al-Mathānī

al-Ṣāhibī Ibn Zakariyyā, al-Ṣāhibī

Sharḥ al-Sunnah - al-Baghawī, Sharḥ al-Sunnah

al-Shifā', al-Qādī<sup>C</sup> Iyād, al-Shifā' bi-Ta<sup>C</sup>rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā

Sīrat Ibn Hishām - Ibn Hishām, al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah

Sīrat Ibn Ishāq - Ibn Ishāq, Sīrat Ibn Ishāq

Ṣubḥ al-A<sup>C</sup>shā - al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-A<sup>C</sup>shā fī Ṣinā<sup>C</sup>at al-Inshā

Sunan Abī Dāwūd - Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, Sunan Abī Dāwūd

Sunan Ibn Mājah - Ibn Mājah, Sunan Ibn Mājah

Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz, - al-Suyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz

Ṭabarī, Tafsīr - al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi<sup>C</sup> al-Bayān<sup>C</sup> An Ta'wīl al-Qurān

Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz - al-Dhahabī, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz

Tafsīr al-Khams Mi'at Āyah - Muqātil, Tafsīr al-Khams Mi'at  
Āyah Min al-Qur'ān Fī al-Amr wa-al-Nahy wa-al-Ḥalāl  
wa-al-Ḥarām

Tafsīr al-Manār - Ridā, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm

Tafsīr al-Marāghī - al-Marāghī, Tafsīr al-Marāghī

Tafsīr al-Qummī - al-Qummī, Tafsīr al-Qummī

Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī - al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk

Tarīkh al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī, al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī, Tārīkh al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī

Tartīb al-Musnad - al-Bannā, al-Fath al-Rabbānī li-Tartīb

Musnad Ahmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī

al-Taṭawwur al-Nahwī - Bergstraesser; al-Taṭawwur al-Nahwī  
li-al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah

Ta'wīl - Ibn Qutaybah, Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān

Thimār al-Qulūb, al-Tha<sup>C</sup>ālibī, Thimār-al-Qulūb fī al-Mudāf wa-al-Mansūb

al-Tamhīd - Ibn al-Bāqillāni, al-Tamhīd fī al-Radd <sup>C</sup>Alā al-Mu<sup>C</sup>attilah Wa-al-Rāfidah Wa-al-Khawārij Wa-al-Mu<sup>C</sup>tazilah.

al-Tibyān - al-Nawawī, al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Hamalat al-Qur'ān

al-Tūsī, al-Tibyān - al-Tūsī, al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī - al-Wāqidī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī

## ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to investigate the nature of the seven ahruf in which the Qur'ān has been revealed and the reason for the variations in readings among the Qurra' of the Qur'ān.

In the first chapter we study the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf and conclude that they mean seven linguistical ways of recitation. The discussion in the following chapter deals with the compilation of the Qur'ān during the lifetime of the Prophet and the preservation of the Qur'ān in the memories of the companions as well as in written form, the compilation during the time of Abū Bakr and the further compilation during the time of <sup>U</sup>thmān.

The problem of naskh is discussed to demonstrate the completeness and trustworthiness of the Qur'ān and that there are no verses missing or which used to be read and were abrogated by Naskh al-Tilāwah either with or without hukm. The following third and fourth chapters deal with the <sup>U</sup>thmanic maṣāḥif and their relation to the seven ahruf. The most acceptable two opinions among the scholars are that they accommodate all or certain ahruf which correspond with the orthography of the maṣāḥif and that these maṣāḥif include what is transmitted by tawātur and avoid āḥād readings which belong to certain personal codices and are transmitted to us in unauthentic chains.

The language of the Qur'ān and whether it includes one, several or all the dialects of the Arabs is discussed in Chapter 5, and it is concluded that the language of the Qur'ān represents the common spoken

literary language of the Arabs which is based on all their dialects with a predominance of Qurashi dialect features.

In Chapter 6 the origin of the Qirā'āt is examined and conditions governing accepted readings are studied. The final chapter studies ikhtiyār, i.e. the selection of one reading rather than an other and the rules governing the Qurra' who select a reading. It is shown that the Qurra' do not have a free hand in this and that any reading should be subject to the correspondence with riwāyah, the orthography of the maṣāḥif and the Arabic language. These readings may differ in meaning but do not contradict each other. In the conclusion we review briefly the issues discussed in the seven chapters of this thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

From the earliest years of my life I have been aware of the phenomenon of variation in reading among the Qur'rā' of the Qur'ān because of the existence of three readings which dominate in the Sudan, the muṣḥaf for one of these readings, (al-Dūrī <sup>C</sup>An Abī <sup>C</sup>Amr) having been published for the first time in the Sudan in 1978.

I have been concerned here to investigate the reasons behind these variations and the origins of the Qirā'āt. Thus I have studied the nature of the seven ahruf in which the Qur'ān has been revealed to conclude that they mean seven linguistical variations reflecting various dialects of the Arabs in ways of recitation of the Qur'ān. The ahādīth which substantiate the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf are found to be sound and successive (mutawātir). ✓

The following chapters study the status of the Qur'ān and its preservation in memories as well as in written records during the lifetime of the Prophet and the compilation of Abū Bakr and the further compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān which dominated the amṣār, when copies were sent accompanied by distinguished Qur'rā', while the personal codices which did not correspond with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif disappeared and ceased to exist. The development of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif is studied down to the printed maṣāḥif of our present day, and it has been concluded that these readings represent the received text of the Qur'ān without alteration. We shall discuss various

issues in a critical way refuting many episodes and allegations concerning the history of the text of the Qur'ān and the maṣāḥif to demonstrate the completeness and trustworthiness of the Qur'ān.

Furthermore the relation between the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and the seven ahruf is studied and as a result it is concluded that the maṣāḥif, which include what is transmitted by tawātur, accommodate either all or a certain unspecified number of the ahruf which correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif.

The question of the language of the Qur'ān is investigated in ancient sources as well as in modern linguistical studies. As a result the text of the Qur'ān is seen to reflect the influence of various dialects of the Arabs. The views of the scholars differed in identifying the most fluent dialects of the Arabs according to their criteria for fluency. In this connection an attempt is made to distinguish between lughah and lahjah in ancient sources and modern studies.

Indeed the language of the Qur'ān represents the common spoken literary language of the Arabs, which is based on all their dialects, with a predominance of Qurashī features.

The origins of the Qirā'āt go back to the teaching of the Prophet, although the phenomenon of variations in readings is noticed only after the Hijrah in Madīnah due to the increase of the number of Muslims belonging to various tribes, this being in order to facilitate the reading of the Qur'ān among them. In this respect we find that whenever the companions differed in reading among



themselves they used to support their reading by referring it to the teachings of the Prophet. This method is followed by the following generation. The conditions for the accepted reading are studied with their development. Thus the readings which correspond with the three conditions for an accepted reading or which lack one or more of them are studied together with the classification of the kinds of readings.

The forebears of the Qirā'āt and the effect of Ibn Mujāhid's al-Sab<sup>c</sup>ah on the following generation are discussed, together with a survey of books composed on the subject of the Qirā'āt.

The Ikhtiyār in reading among the qualified Qurṛā' of the Qur'ān is governed by the conditions for the accepted readings. Thus they have no free hand in their selection and the theory of reading the Qur'ān in accordance with the meaning is shown to be groundless.

The orthography of the maṣāḥif is intended to preserve the sound transmitted and authentic reading but never to initiate or create a reading. Certain accepted readings are objected to by some philologists and grammarians; some examples are studied to conclude that they are sound and accepted readings on the grounds of their sound transmission, fluency and correspondence with various Arab dialects.

In addition it is emphasised that there are no grammatical or orthographical errors in the <sup>c</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif.

Moreover, the sound accepted readings, although they may differ in meaning, never contradict each other. In the conclusion the main issues discussed in the seven chapters of this thesis are briefly reviewed.

In the present study we have relied upon various standard books in manuscript and printed form on Qirā'āt and the sciences of the Qur'ān (<sup>C</sup>U<sup>l</sup>ūm al-Qur'ān), Tafsīr, Hadīth, history, grammar and Arabic studies.

In the Qirā'āt and the sciences of the Qur'ān we have mainly benefited from Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah's Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, Ibn Mujāhid's Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, al-Dānī's al-Taysīr fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C</sup>, al-Muqni<sup>C</sup> fī Rasm Maṣāḥif al-Amsār and al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif, Ibn al-Bāqillānī's Nukat al-Intisār, Makkī Ibn Abī Tālib al-Qaysī's al-Ibānah <sup>C</sup>An Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qirā'āt and al-Kashf <sup>C</sup>An Wujūh al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C</sup>, Ibn al-Jazarī's al-Nashr and Munjid al-Muqri'īn, al-Qaṣṭallānī's Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt, al-Zarkashī's al-Burhān and al-Suyūṭī's al-Itqān.

In fact they are most used in discussions about the meaning of the seven ahruf and their relation to the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, the personal codices and their end the origins of Qirā'āt.

In the field of Tafsīr we have used the books of al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurtubī, Abū Ḥayyān and Ibn Kathīr, in interpretation of certain verses which are read in various ways and support of certain accepted readings and grammatical arguments concerning certain other readings.

As regards the substantiation of revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, compilation of the Qur'ān, the arrangement of sūras and verses and the problem of Naskh, we have benefited from the standard books on the literature of Hadīth, mainly from Bukhārī, Muslim and other canonical works, al-Muwatṭā', al-Musnad and the four al-Sunan.

We have only used the authentic aḥādīth which are sound in their transmission and context. Furthermore certain aḥādīth although sound from the point of view of their asānīd, are not accepted because on the matter of the Qur'ān, tawātur is always required. In the commentaries on aḥādīth we most benefited from Ibn Ḥajar al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī's Fath al-Bārī and al-Baghawī's Sharḥ al-Sunnah.

In this connection we have also used al-Ṭabarī's Tārīkh, Ibn al-Athīr's al-Kāmil and Ibn Kathīr's al-Bidāyah, particularly in questions and issues relating to the compilation of the Qur'ān.

Finally as regards the language of the Qur'ān, and the problem of fluent and most fluent of Arab dialects, many primary sources are used such as Sībawayh's al-Kitāb, Ibn Faris' al-Ṣāḥibī, Ibn Jinnī's al-Khaṣā'is and al-Suyūṭī's al-Muzhir and al-Iqtirāḥ.

Use of modern studies has also been made and we have consulted various books on different topics, written in different languages such as al-Alūsī's Tafsīr, al-Zurqānī's Manāhil al-<sup>C</sup>Irfān, Hammūdah's al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt and a number of works entitled Tārīkh al-Qur'ān composed by Rūstūfadūnī, al-Zinjānī, al-Kurdī, al-Ibyārī, and Shāhīn, al-Nūr's Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Maṣāḥif, Nöldeke's Geschichte Des Qur'ān, and Jeffery's Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān.

In fact the primary sources are mainly used in support of the views discussed with reference to certain modern works.

Although many books have been read in this field reference has been made only to those cited. The bibliography shows the books used in the present study.

The importance of this topic in the ancient and modern studies lies in the fact that it concerns the Qur'ān which is the main source of belief and law and the eternal word of God to the believers.

In particular there is no work in any Western language devoted wholly to the question of Qirā'āt, despite the great contribution made by Western scholars like Gustavus Fluegel, Otto Pretzl, G. Bergstraesser and Arthur Jeffery in publishing texts on Qirā'āt.

In the writings of modern Arab scholars some like those of Hammūdah and al-Zurqānī are very helpful, though they only deal with certain aspects of the problem, or are devoted generally to the sciences of the Qur'ān rather than the Qirā'āt. Thus although what has been written in the field is very extensive, as the bibliography shows, there is still need of critical studies.

In the present work we have attempted to study comprehensively and critically the questions relating to our limited topic of the variant readings of the Qur'ān and their historical and linguistic origins. It is hoped that this thesis will make some contribution to our knowledge of the sciences of the Qur'ān which still deserves a great deal of elucidation.

## CHAPTER 1

REVELATION OF THE QUR'ĀN IN SEVEN AHRUF

## CHAPTER 1

### REVELATION OF THE QUR'ĀN IN SEVEN AHRUF

The text of the Qur'ān has allowed from the earliest time several equally valid ways of recitation. Several ahādīth, which are often quoted in support of this practice, will be discussed here with a view to finding out how and why variant readings existed and also understanding some of the implications of the texts. The following hadīth is a good indication of the existence of these various ways of recitation:

"it is narrated by <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>ʿ</sup>Abbās that the prophet peace be upon him said 'Gabriel recited the Qur'ān to me in one ḥarf. Then I requested him (to read it in another ahruf) and continued asking him to recite in other ḥarf till he ultimately recited it in seven ahruf."<sup>1</sup>

Various ahādīth offer some indication of the existence of arguments and disagreements amongst the Companions on this subject, whenever one of them found another reciting the Qur'ān in a different way from that which he had been taught. One such event took place between <sup>ʿ</sup>Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Hishām b. Ḥakīm as illustrated in the following hadīth:

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.481-482, Muslim, vol.I, p.561; Muslim added "Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī said: It has been narrated to me that these seven ḥarfs are in one meaning and do not differ concerning Halāl or Harām". Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.29, and al-Baghawī, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.501.

It is narrated from <sup>C</sup>Umar b. al-Khattāb he said:  
 "I heard Hishām b. Hakīm reciting Sūrat al-Furqān during the life time of Allāh's Apostle and I listened to his recitation and noticed that he recited in several different ways which Allāh's Apostle had not taught me. I was about to jump over him during his prayer but I controlled my temper and when he had completed his prayer I put his upper garment around his neck and seized him by it and said: "Who taught you this sūrah which I heard you reciting?" He said: "Allāh's Apostle taught it to me." I said "You have told a lie, for Allāh's Apostle has taught it to me in a different way from yours." So I dragged him to Allāh's Apostle and said (to Allāh's Apostle) "I heard this person reciting Sūrat al-Furqān in a way which you have not taught me!" On that Allāh's Apostle said "Release him (O <sup>C</sup>Umar)! Recite O Hishām!" Then he recited in the same way as I heard him reciting. Then Allāh's Apostle said "It was revealed in this way" and added "Recite O <sup>C</sup>Umar!" I recited it as he had taught me. Allāh's Apostle then said: "It was revealed in this way. This Qur'ān has been revealed to be recited in seven ahruf, so recite of it whichever is easier for you."<sup>1</sup>

It would appear from this ḥadīth that the purpose of the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf is to facilitate recitation for Muslims, and in fact there are many references in the ahādīth to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf to make its recitation easy for people.

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.482-483, Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, pp.24-25. See also the argument between Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b and <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd, and between <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Ās and another, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.26.

The following are some examples:

1. "The Qur'ān was sent down in seven ahruf, so recite what seems easy therefrom."<sup>1</sup>
2. "The prophet peace be upon him met Gabriel and told him "I have been sent to an illiterate people, among them are the old woman, the aged shaykh, the servant and the female servant, and the man who has never read a book." Then he said to him "O Muhammad the Qur'ān has been revealed in seven ahruf."<sup>2</sup>
3. "Verily this Qur'ān has been revealed in seven ahruf, so recite at liberty... ." <sup>3</sup>
4. "Gabriel came to the prophet peace be upon him and said "Allāh has commanded you to recite to your people the Qur'ān in one harf." Upon this he said "I ask for Allāh's pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it... ." <sup>4</sup>
5. In another hadīth "Make things easy for my people" or "Make affairs easy for my people."<sup>5</sup>

The revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf for the Muslims in order to make it easier for them is confirmed by the following verse:

"And We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy To understand and remember..." (S.LIV, 17).

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1. Muslim, vol.II, p.391.

2. Related by Tirmidhī who says it is a good and sound hadīth. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī, vol.XIV, p.63, al-Baghawī, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.508 and Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.35.

3. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.46.

4. Muslim, vol.II, p.391.

5. ibid., p.390.



Many commentators point out that it was very difficult for the Arabs who were - in most - an illiterate people with various ways of pronunciation or dialects to be ordered or even asked to abandon their own dialects and ways of recitation all at once. This is because it was difficult to do so, and because people tried to cling strongly to their dialects.<sup>1</sup>

The permission to recite the Qur'ān in seven ahruf was given after the Hijrah as is clear from the following hadīth.

✓ Ubayy b. Ka<sup>c</sup>b reported that the Apostle of Allāh (may peace be upon him) was near the Tank of Banū Ghifār when Gabriel came to him and said: "Allāh has commanded you to recite to your people the Qur'ān in one harf." Upon this he said: "I ask from Allāh pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it." He then came for the second time and said: "Allāh has commanded you that you should recite the Qur'ān to your people in two ahruf." Upon this he again said: "I seek pardon and forgiveness from Allāh, my people would not be able to do so." He (Gabriel) came for the third time and said: "Allāh has commanded you to recite the Qur'ān to your people in three ahruf." Upon this he said: "I ask pardon and forgiveness from Allāh. My people would not be able to do it." He then came to him for the fourth time and said: "Allāh has commanded you to recite the Qur'ān to your people in seven ahruf, and in whichever they would recite, they would be right."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Suyūṭī, Itqān, vol.I, p.136, Ibn Ḥajar al-<sup>c</sup>Asqalānī, Fath al-Bārī vol.IX, p.22, Ibn al-Jazarī, Nashr, vol.I, p.22.

2. Muslim, vol.II, p.391, Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.40.

Adāt Banī Ghifār which is translated as "the Tank of Banū Ghifār" is a place near Madīnah, being attributed to the Banū Ghifār because they used to live around this tank.<sup>1</sup>

In another version it is stated that Gabriel met the prophet near Ahjār al Mirā'<sup>2</sup> which is a place near Qubā' in the countryside around Madīnah.<sup>3</sup>

This does not, however, mean that that part of the Qur'ān which which was revealed after the hijrah was the only part to be recited in seven ahruf. This is shown by the previously mentioned argument between <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām about different versions of Sūrat al-Furqān which was revealed in Makkah.<sup>4</sup> Such arguments between the companions were not acceptable, and so the prophet himself forbade his companions to dispute about this matter and became angry whenever he found some of them disputing because of differences in recitation. Once he said:

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.28, al Qasṭall ānī, Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt vol.I, p.35, Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.36, al-Bakrī, Mu<sup>C</sup>jam Mā Ista<sup>C</sup>jam vol.I, p.164.
  2. Related by Tirmidhī who says: "It is good and sound ḥadīth, see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī, vol.IV, p.61, Ahmad, Musnad vol.V, p.132, Baghawī, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.508, Tabarī, vol.I, p.35.
  3. See Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, pp.35-36. Mujāhid says it is Qubā' itself. See Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāyah, vol.I, p.203. al Bakrī in his book Mu<sup>C</sup>jam Mā Ista<sup>C</sup>jam vol.I, p.117, was confused when he mentioned it as in Makkah. In fact he thought Sujiyy al-Sabāb was the same place as Ahjār al-Mirā'.
  4. al-Suyūṭī, Itqān, vol.I, p.27.

"Verily this Qur'ān has been revealed to be recited in seven ahruf, in every harf you recite you have done so correctly. So don't argue since this may lead to kufr."<sup>1</sup>

There are so many ahādīth about the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf that Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (224/838) considered them as successive (mutawātir) ahādīth.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, Goldziher attributes to him the opinion that these ahādīth are shādhah and without an acceptable isnād, referring to the Alif Bā' of al-Balawī.<sup>3</sup> In fact however it is only one hadīth which is rejected by Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, that which refers to the seven ahruf being revealed in seven different meanings (see pp.15-16 below). The other ahādīth are regarded as mutawātir, and he interprets them as referring to seven dialects.<sup>4</sup>

al-Suyūṭī (911/1505) counted the names of the companions who narrated these hadīths, and he found out that there were twenty of them.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Related by Ahmad, Musnad, vol.IV, pp.169-170, Tabarī, vol.I, p.44, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.21, Ibn Kathīr: Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, p.65.

2. Nashr, vol.I, p.21, Itqān, vol.I, p.78. In fact this large number of companions who narrated these hadīths must have been the reason for Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd's considering them as successive hadīths (mutawātir), since this number of people found in the generation of the companions do not exist among the successors. Nevertheless it is a famous and good hadīth. See al-Zurqānī Manāhil al-<sup>C</sup>Irfān, vol.I, p.132.

3. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.54, quoting al-Balawī, Alif Bā', Vol.I, p.210

4. See p.18 below.

5. Itqān, vol.I, p.131; Suyūṭī studied the work of Ibn al-Jazarī and added two to the nineteen which the latter had already collected. See Nashr, vol.I, p.21.

This fact is supported by another ḥadīth to the effect that <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmān b. <sup>ʿ</sup>Affān asked those present at the mosque of Madīnah if anyone of them had ever heard the Prophet peace be upon him saying: "The Qur'ān has been revealed to be recited in seven ahruf". In response a huge number of them stood up and testified that they had heard this ḥadīth. Consequently <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmān himself emphasised this ḥadīth by stating that he testified with them.<sup>1</sup>

Since it is established that all these ahruf are correct and sound there was felt to be little point in disputing over them. Hence it is forbidden to argue on this matter and it is not even permitted to favour one harf as being better than the other. The reason for this is that all the ahruf are sound and "It has been revealed in this way".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly everyone should recite as he has been taught.

#### The meaning of seven ahruf in the ahādīth

There are many interpretations which attempt to clarify the exact meaning of the Ahruf mentioned in the ahādīth. Each group of scholars tried to find out and establish the exact meaning according to its own views.

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1. Nashr, vol.I, p.21, Ibn al-Jazarī says this ḥadīth is related by al-Hāfiz Abū Ya<sup>ʿ</sup>lā in his book al-Musnad al-Kabīr, Iṭqān, vol.I, p.131.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.482, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.26.

We will here discuss all the views given on this matter and then attempt to establish the meaning on the basis of the available evidence.

First of all, however, we must discuss the meaning of the expression "Seven".

1. A group of scholars say the number "Seven" mentioned in the hadīth is not intended as an exact number, but is a symbolic term meaning a considerable number less than ten. Hence the number seven denotes numerousness in the single figures just as seventy means numerousness in tens and seven hundred means numerousness in hundreds. For instance in the Qur'ānic verse "The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. God giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth." (S.II,261). In another verse "Whether thou ask forgiveness or not (their sin is unforgivable): If though thou ask seventy times forgiveness, God will not forgive them". (S.IX,80).

There is also a hadīth which says: "Every (good) deed of the Son of Adam does will be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundred reward".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Muslim (Arabic Text), vol.II, p.480; for the translation of the hadīth see Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh, vol.II, p.417.

Ibn Hajar al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī (852/1448) related this saying from <sup>C</sup>Iyād (544/1149) and his successors.<sup>1</sup>

2. The majority maintained that the exact meaning of the expression "Seven" in the hadīth means precisely the odd number seven that follows the number six and precedes eight in arithmetic. In this respect we can refer to the following Qur'ānic verses in which the number is meant to be the same, neither more nor less. ✓

- a. "To it are seven Gates: for each of those Gates Is a (special) class (Of sinners) assigned." (S.XV,44)
- b. "(Yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth." (S.XVIII,22)

And in fact there is no reason for abandoning the exact meaning of the number seven and making attempts to interpret it as a metaphorical term, for there is no clear evidence to support this.

Moreover the hadīth itself makes clear in various versions that the number seven is intended to be the exact number neither more nor less. Among those versions are the following:

- a. "... And he recited it in other ahruf till he ultimately recited it in seven ahruf."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.23, Itqān, vol.I, p.131; also al-Zarkashī attributed it to certain scholars. See Burhān, vol.I, p.212. Ibn al-Jazarī says in Nashr, vol.I, pp.25-26, "It is said the number seven does not mean the exact meaning. But it means here the numerousness and simplicity." See also the Encyclopaedia of Islam, I, vol.II, p.1073. al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī in his book I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, p.70, Ahmad <sup>C</sup>Ādil Kamāl in his book U<sup>C</sup>lūm al-Qur'ān, pp.85-86, and <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn in Tārīkh al-Qur'ān have chosen this opinion.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.482.

b. "... Then I realised it has been ended in this number."<sup>1</sup>

c. The repeated asking for more ahruf between the Prophet and Gabriel started from one harf to two, three, up to seven.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the majority opinion of the scholars is that the number is limited and confined to the number seven and we may be able to say, after this discussion, that the number seven mentioned in all the versions of this hadīth is precisely the real and exact number known to the people. The hadīth indicates that the Qur'ān has been revealed in seven ahruf, and the majority accepted this meaning of "seven", but differed in explaining and identifying these seven ahruf and giving examples.

#### Meaning of ahruf in the Arabic Language

The word ahruf is the plural of harf. It is given several meanings in the Arabic lexicons;

1. The extremity, verge, border, margin, brink, brow, side or edge of anything, as, for instance, the side of a river and of a ship or boat.<sup>3</sup>

In this respect we can refer to saying of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās "People of the book do not come to the women, except from the side (illā <sup>C</sup>alā harf)".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Related by Nasā'ī see Itqān, vol.I, pp.131-132.

2. Muslim, vol.II, p.391.

3. Qāmūs, vol.III, p.130, al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Hadīth, vol.I, p.369,

Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.41, Lane, Book 1, Part II, p.550.

4. Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.42.

The word ḥarf occurs in a Qur'ānic verse with the same meaning:

"There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!" (S.XXII, 11)

2. A letter of the alphabet, the letters being thus called because they are the extremities of the word and the syllable.

Ḥarf can be used to describe a she-camel, probably thin like alif in the Arabic alphabet, big or huge like the mountain.<sup>1</sup>

3. As a grammatical term, it means a particle, i.e. what is used to express a meaning and is not a noun or a verb. Every other definition of it is bad.<sup>2</sup>

4. Mode or manner, or way, as, for instance, in reciting the Qur'ān according to seven modes or manners of reading, whence such phrases as "Fulān yaqra' bi-ḥarf Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd". (Such a one reads in the manner of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd.)<sup>3</sup>

5. A dialect, an idiom or mode of expression, peculiar to certain 'Arabs'. Accordingly the ḥadīth "Nazal al-Qur'ān <sup>C</sup>alā Sab<sup>C</sup>at aḥruf"

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1. Qāmūs, vol.III, p.131, Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, pp.41-42, Lane, Book 1, Part II, p.550.

2. Qāmūs, vol.III, p.131, Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.41, Lane, Book 1, Part II, p.550.

3. Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.41, Lane I, II, p.550.



would mean. "The Qur'ān has been revealed to seven dialects of the dialects of the Arabs." This interpretation is attributed to Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Abbās (291/903), al-Azharī (370/980), and Ibn al-Athīr (606/1209).<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Athīr considered this interpretation the best one.<sup>2</sup>

#### The interpretation of "Seven Ahruf"

Most of the Scholars say that the number seven is really meant to be the exact number, but differ in interpreting the meaning of the word ahruf in the ḥadīth, since as seen above ahruf is a common word which has several meanings which can only be determined by context.<sup>3</sup>

However the context of the ahādīth under discussion allows for more than one interpretation, and as a result we find differing interpretations of the ahādīth as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

✓ This early difference of opinion produced many sayings, all of which are repeated and overlap. Ibn Ḥibbān (354/965) counted thirty five of them,<sup>5</sup> while al-Suyūṭī claimed that there were about forty although he did not quote all of them.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Qāmūs, vol.III, p.131, Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.41, Lane, I, II, p.550.

2. Nihāyah, vol.I, p.369, (see Chapter 5).

3. Manāhil, vol.I, p.146.

4. Burhān, vol.I, p.212.

5. Itqān, vol.I, pp.173-176, Burhān, vol.I, p.212, Ibn Ḥibbān himself says: "These sayings resemble one another and are possible, and other interpretations are possible". See Itqān vol.I, p.176.

6. Itqān, vol.I, pp.131-141.

A comprehensive study and comparison of all the views and opinions expressed concerning this ḥadīth allows us to summarise and arrange them as follows:

1. They are ambiguous and their meaning cannot be known with certainty, because the word ḥarf has different meanings, a letter of the alphabet, a word, a meaning, or a way.

This is the view of Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>dān al-Naḥwī (231/845).<sup>1</sup> This view has been opposed on the ground that a common word can be known and fixed according to the context. For instance, the word (<sup>c</sup>ayn) has more than one meaning which can be realised and identified in the sentence, in which it occurs, for example (Nazartu bi-<sup>c</sup>ayn al-mujarradah) and (Sharibt min <sup>c</sup>ayn Zubaydah). The meaning is clear and it is not ambiguous. In the first sentence the word (<sup>c</sup>ayn) means 'eye' and in the second sentence it means 'water'. This is made clear by the use of the word (Nazartu) (I have seen) in the first sentence and the word (Sharibtu) (I have drunk) in the second sentence.<sup>2</sup>

2. The word ḥarf may mean "ways of pronunciation" which was the view of al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (170/786).<sup>3</sup>

This has been objected to because no word in the Qur'ān can be read in seven ways with the exception of very few words such as the word "uff". Even if it is argued that each word may read in one way or two or three or more up to seven, there are many words which can be read in more than seven ways.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Burhān, vol.I, p.213, Itqān, vol.I, p.131.

2. Manāhil, vol.I, p.165.

3. Burhān, vol.I, p.213.

4. Burhān, vol.I, p.213, Itqān, vol.I, p.132.

Most of the scholars, for example al-Ṭabarī (310/922), are opposed to this view and even al-Zarkashī (794/1391) considered it the weakest one.<sup>1</sup>

However the seven ahruf, if the meaning of the word is to be taken in this way, must not be regarded as being in any way connected with the seven readings which are collected for the first time by Ibn Mujāhid (324/935),<sup>2</sup> which did not exist in the life time of the Prophet or even in the first century.

Indeed scholars of Qur'ānic studies used to collect readings regardless of number, and many more readings than the seven of Ibn Mujāhid existed. The first scholar known to have collected readings in written form is Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (224/838) who is said to have given twenty five readings.<sup>3</sup>

Later al-Ṭabarī (310/922) wrote a book called al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> fī-l-Qirā'āt which contained more than twenty readings.<sup>4</sup> This work is no longer extant, although much of the material is incorporated into his Tafsīr. Many scholars did not agree with Ibn Mujāhid's attempt to limit the number of readings to seven for the precise reason that the following generation might think that these seven readings were the same as the seven ahruf referred to in the ḥadīth.<sup>5</sup> Indeed a famous scholar in the field of Qur'ānic readings, Abū Shāmāh (665/1267)

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1. Burhān, vol.I, p.213.

2. Nashr, vol.I, p.34.

3. ibid., pp.33-34.

4. ibid., p.34; more detail on this matter is available on pp.213/217.

5. Nashr, vol.I, p.36.

is quoted as having said. "No one thinks that these seven readings are what is meant in the ḥadīth except the ignorant".

3. Seven kinds of meanings. Those who subscribe to this opinion differ in their interpretation. Some say, for example, that it refers to command and prohibition, lawful and unlawful, muḥkam and mutashābih (that whose meaning is accepted and that which is disputable) and parables (amthāl).<sup>2</sup>

There is a ḥadīth related by Ḥākim (405/1014) and al-Bayhaqī (458/1065) in favour of this view: "The Qur'ān has been revealed from seven doors according to seven ahruf, restraining, commending, lawful, unlawful, muḥkam, mutashābih and amthāl.<sup>3</sup> However this ḥadīth which is not reported elsewhere is said by Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr (563/1070) not to be authentic and definitely weak and not sound.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore al-Bayhaqī himself who narrated this ḥadīth mentioned that what is meant here by the seven ahruf is the kinds of meaning in which the Qur'ān has been revealed, but that the other aḥādīth refer to dialects.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī (833/1429) raised a good reason for refuting this view which is that the Companions did not dispute and disagree with each other about the interpretation of the verses but only about the ways of the recitation as happened between <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām and others.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Itqān, vol.I, p.138.

2. Itqān, vol.I, pp.136-138.

3. ibid., p.136.

4. Burhān, vol.I, p.216.

5. Itqān, vol.I, p.137. This is also the view of Abū Shāmah,

Abū <sup>C</sup>Alī al-Ahwāzī, and Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Alā' al-Hamadānī, see ibid., pp.171-172.

6. Nashr, vol.I, p.25.

Finally, it is impossible to recite the Qur'ān as if all of it is ḥalāl or ḥarām or amthāl.<sup>1</sup>

It is allowable to recite a verse in several ways of recitation, but not for a verse to be read in various ways which lead to contradiction as would be the case with ḥalāl and ḥarām.<sup>2</sup>

4. Seven ways of recitation using synonyms, for example, Ta<sup>C</sup>āl, aqbil, <sup>C</sup>ajjil, asri<sup>C</sup>.

Many scholars adopted this opinion<sup>3</sup> quoting their evidence from the aḥādīth referring to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf. It is narrated by Abū Bakrah that "Gabriel came to the Prophet and said "O Muhammad recite the Qur'ān in one ḥarf," and Mīkā'il said "Ask for more" till he reached seven ahruf, each effective and sufficient, provided you do not seal a verse of punishment with mercy or a verse of mercy with punishment, like your saying: Ta<sup>C</sup>āl, aqbil, halumma, idhhab, asri<sup>C</sup>, <sup>C</sup>ajjil.<sup>4</sup>

We can bring many arguments against this interpretation. First of all, this ḥadīth is meant to show that the ahruf in which the Qur'ān has been revealed are synonymous in one meaning, and secondly to witness that there is no contradiction in these ahruf (i.e. they do not seal a verse of punishment with mercy...).<sup>5</sup>

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1. Itqān, vol.I, p.137.

2. ibid.

3. Itqān, vol.I, pp.134-135. al-Suyūṭī quoting from Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd-al-Barr attributes this to most of the scholars and specifically mentions the names of Sufyān b. <sup>C</sup>Uyaynah, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Wahb and al-Ṭahāwī.

4. Related by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī with a sound chain; there are other versions which give the same meaning. See Qurtubī, vol.I, p.42. Itqān, vol.I, p.134.

5. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.42, Itqān, vol.I, p.134 quoting Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr.

Further, it is not within the discretion of individuals to recite the Qur'ān in their own way or to put one word or letter instead of another, whether it changes the meaning or not.<sup>1</sup> One should have heard the appropriate recitation from the prophet himself directly or from him through his Companions and successors.<sup>2</sup> In this respect we may refer to the above-mentioned argument between <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām where each one said "Allāh's Apostle has taught it me".<sup>3</sup>

Moreover those who adopted this opinion agreed that this permission was given in the beginning when most of the Arabs were illiterate and that subsequently the other six ahruf were abrogated, so that there is only one harf available now.<sup>4</sup> We can contest this interpretation because it is still permissible to recite the Qur'ān in several ways, so that one can find an example of synonyms in Sūrat al-Hujurāt, where Fatabayyanū is also read Fatathabbatū.<sup>5</sup>

Thus we cannot claim that all variants of this type have been abrogated or that such a temporary concession with the aim of making recitation easier for the first generation is implied by the term harf.<sup>6</sup>

1. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.43, quoting al-Bāqillānī.

2. Fatḥ al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22.

3. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.483.

4. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.43, Itqān, vol.I, p.134-135.

5. XLIX, 6. The latter being the reading of Hamzah and al-Kisā'ī while the former is read by the rest of the Qur'ān, see al-Qaysī, Kitāb al-Tabṣirah, pp.480 and 681 and al-Nashr, vol.II, pp.351 and 376 adding Khaṭaf to Hamzah and al-Kisā'ī.

6. Manāhil, vol.I, pp.68-69.

5. Seven of the dialects of the Arabs. The dialects of the Arabs were of course more than seven, but the supporters of this view maintain that what is meant are the seven most eloquent dialects.<sup>1</sup>

There is no agreement on identifying these seven dialects and the various versions differ greatly, although all are agreed in including that of Quraysh.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah (275/888) attempted to prove that the Qur'ān was revealed only in the dialect of Quraysh, quoting the Qur'ānic text

"We sent not an apostle except (to teach) in the language Of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now God leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom." (S.XIV, 4).

In his opinion these dialects should represent various branches of Quraysh.<sup>3</sup> al-Qaṣṭallānī (923/1517) maintains that Quraysh were neighbours of the Ka<sup>C</sup>bah, and that they were leaders for the tribes of the Arabs. Then they used to choose the best of style and words from each dialect from all the tribes who came to Makkah.<sup>4</sup> This view however appears to be an attempt to conflate two different ideas, i.e. that the ahruf were dialects and that they were all variants of Qurashī Arabic. In this respect there is a statement attributed to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān "The Qur'ān

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1. Burhān, vol.I, pp.217-218, Itqān, vol.I, p.169. This view is related by Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, Tha<sup>C</sup>lab, Sijistanī, al-Qāḍi Abū Bakr, al-Azharī, al-Bāqillānī, and Ibn <sup>C</sup>Aṭiyyah, see also Ibn Abī Zakariyyā, al-Ṣāhibi, pp.41-42.

2. Itqān, vol.I, pp.135-136, Nashr, vol.I, p.24, Burhān, vol.I, pp.218-219. Qurtubī, vol.I, pp.44-45.

3. Itqān, vol.I, p.135, where Abū <sup>C</sup>Alī al-Ahwāzī is also quoted.

4. Latā'if, vol.I, p.33.

has been revealed in the language of Quraysh".<sup>1</sup> The most that this statement can mean is that the Qur'ān is mainly in the dialect of Quraysh, since features from other dialects are found, for example the retention of hamz which generally disappears in the language of Hijāz.<sup>2</sup> However many accounts indicate that the Qur'ān was not revealed solely in the style of Quraysh. Although sometimes it comes in the style of Quraysh it also comes in the style of other tribes of the Arabs according to the most fluent and shortest ways of expression. For

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1. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.44; there is another version attributed to <sup>C</sup>Umar in which he wrote to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd "The Qur'ān has been revealed in the language of Quraysh, so do not recite to the people in the dialect of Hudhayl". See also al-Qastallānī, Laṭā'if vol.I, p.33. In some versions of these sayings the name of Mudar appears instead of Quraysh, but Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd Al-Barr says: "the authentic version is the first in which Quraysh was mentioned, because it is sound and came through the people of Madīnah, (Burhān, vol.I, pp.219-220). Also some features of the speech of Mudar are anomalous and are not allowed in the recitation of the Qur'ān. For example, the Kashkashah of Qays, e.g. they turn the fem. sing. 2nd person - Ki into Shi in the verse "Rabbuki Taḥtaki" to read "Rabbushi Taḥtashi" (XIX, 24) and the tamtamah of Tamīm, e.g. changing sin to ta' so that in "al-Nās" it read "al-Nāt" (Qurtubī, vol.I, p.45, Burhān, vol.I, pp.219-220).
  2. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.44 quoting Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr and al-Qādī Ibn al-Ṭayyib who says Allāh Almighty says: We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic (XLIII, 3, A.Y. Ali's Translation, p.1342) and the Almighty did not say "Qur'ānan Qurashiyyan". No one claims that only Quraysh is meant here because the name of Arab covers all tribes. (Qurtubī, vol.I, p.44.)



instance Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās did not understand the meaning of the word Fatar till he heard two Bedouins talking about digging a well using this verb.<sup>1</sup> It might be most reasonable to assume that the Qur'ān was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh and their neighbours at the beginning of the revelation. Then the permission came later on for all Arabs to recite the Qur'ān in their own dialects which they were used to, bearing in mind that these dialects were extremely varied. Thus they were not ordered or even asked to abandon their own dialects in favour of that of Quraysh, because it was difficult to do so, and because people tried to cling strongly to their dialects. And above all, this was for the sake of easiness in the recitation and understanding of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

This permission was not left to the individuals to change any word to one of its synonyms in his dialects, but everyone should be taught it directly from the prophet.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, there are no objections against this idea of the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven dialects because <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām, although both of them belonged to Quraysh, differed in their recitation. It does not seem reasonable to accept disagreement between two men who belonged to one dialect unless that difference referred to something else.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Qurtubī, vol.1, p.45.

2. Nashr, vol.1, p.22, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22.

In this respect the Encyclopaedia of Islam (1st ed.), Vol.II, p.1067 says: "The language in which Muhammad delivered his revelation was according to the most natural assumption the Hidjāz dialect of the people of Mecca".

3. Itqān, vol.I, p.136.

4. Nashr, vol.1, p.24, Itqān, vol.I, p.136, al-<sup>C</sup>Izz b. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Salām objected to the interpretation of the seven ahruf as seven dialects (Khams Rasā'il Nādirah, p.64). See Hammūdah, al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt p.25.

Later in his I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī adopted this view of interpreting the seven ahruf as seven dialects of the Arabs, but the number seven in his opinion is a symbolic term meaning a considerable number. He says: "These seven ahruf mean the dialects of the Arabs to make it easy for each tribe to recite the Qur'ān in their own way as they were used to in their dialects". He claimed that - to Arabs - the word harf merely means "dialect". But they began - after Islam - to use the word harf for a word read in other ways of recitation, as, for instance, they say "Hādhā fī harf Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd" meaning his reading.<sup>1</sup>

#### 6. Seven varieties and differences in the readings.

The first scholar to make this suggestion is Ibn Qutaybah, who was followed by the following generation with little or no modification. Ibn Qutaybah states that he has studied the ways of the differences in readings and found them seven ways:

- (1) A difference in the I<sup>C</sup>rāb and vocalisation of the word which does not alter its consonantal outline in the orthography and does not alter its meaning, e.g. hunna aṭharu/hunna aṭhara.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) A difference in the I<sup>C</sup>rāb and the vocalisation of the word which alters the meaning of the word but does not alter its consonantal outline, e.g. rabbānā bā<sup>C</sup>id/rabbunā bā<sup>C</sup>ada.<sup>3</sup>

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1. I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, pp.70-71. For more details see Chapter 5 below.

2. XI, 78.

3. XXXN, 19.

- (3) A difference in the ahruf of the word but not in its I<sup>C</sup>rāb which alters its meaning and does not change its consonantal outline, e.g. nunshizuhā/nanshuruḥā.<sup>1</sup>
- (4) A difference in the word which changes its consonantal outline in the orthography and does not change its meaning, e.g. in kānat illā ṣayḥatan/zaqyatan.<sup>2</sup>
- (5) A difference in the word which changes its consonantal outline and its meaning, e.g. wa-ṭalḥin mandūd/wa-ṭal<sup>C</sup>in nadīd.<sup>3</sup>
- (6) A difference in word order, e.g. wa-jā'at sakratu-l-mawti bil-ḥaqqi/Sakratu-l-ḥaqqi bi-l-Mawti.<sup>4</sup>
- (7) A difference in letters or augment, e.g. wa-mā<sup>C</sup>amilathu/wa-mā<sup>C</sup>amilat.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī's work agrees with Ibn Qutaybah in the ways in which he explains the ahruf, except that he discusses them more clearly in identifying and giving examples.

Abū-al-Faḍl al-Rāzī (630/1232) follows the same approach to this question as Ibn Qutaybah, but he puts the ways of differences in a different order. For instance, his first and second types are included in the

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1. II, 259.

2. XXXVI, 29.

3. LVI, 29 & <sup>L, 10;</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī approved this analysis of Ibn Qutaybah except that he criticised it with respect to this example since it has not relevance to the difference in reading; Ibn al-Jazarī says: "If he had used as an example in place of this bi-ḍanīn/ bi-ḥanīn (LXXXI, 24) the example would be valid. See Nashr, vol. I, p. 28.

4. L, 19.

5. XXXVI, 35.

fifth type of Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al-Jazarī while the third in al-Rāzī's arrangement covers the first and second of the other two. The sixth of al-Rāzī agrees with the fifth of the others, and finally the seventh of al-Rāzī might possibly be included in the first of Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al-Jazarī, although in fact this last suggestion of al-Rāzī should not be dismissed in this way, because of its significance, since al-Rāzī refers here to difference in dialect concerned with absence or presence of Imālah, tafkhīm, hamz, etc. Some scholars consider all differences to be a question of differences of pronunciation of this type.<sup>1</sup>

These are the differences between the scholars, who agree in their general approach; for instance, Makkī b. Abī Tālib mentions that a group of scholars adopted a view similar to that of Ibn Qutaybah, but he only explains their interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

The scholars who take this view are Ibn Qutaybah,<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī,<sup>4</sup> al-Rāzī,<sup>5</sup> Makkī b. Tālib al-Qaysī (437/1045),<sup>6</sup> the author of Kitāb al-Mabānī fī Nazm al-Ma<sup>c</sup>ānī<sup>7</sup> and Ibn al-Bāqillānī (403/1012).<sup>8</sup>

1. Itqān, vol.I, p.133; al-Rāfi<sup>c</sup>ī, in his book I<sup>c</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, p.70, adopts this view. The work of the author of Kitāb al-Mabānī fī Nazm al-Ma<sup>c</sup>ānī adopts the same view. See pp.221-228, Muqaddimatān fī <sup>c</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān, ed. A. Jeffery.

2. Ibānah, p.36.

3. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān, pp.28-30.

4. Nashr, vol.I, pp.26-27.

5. ibid., p.25, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.29. Ibn Hajar says here "al-Rāzī quoted Ibn Qutaybah and refined it".

6. Ibānah, pp.37-42.

7. Muqaddimatān, pp.221-228.

8. Nukat al-Intiṣār, pp.120-122 and Qurṭubī, vol.I, pp.109-113.

The author of al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān<sup>1</sup> rejected all the ahādīth of the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf simply on the grounds that these hadīths were not narrated through the Isnād of the Ahl al-Bayt in line with his Shi<sup>C</sup>ite methodology. He states that after the prophet, reference in religious affairs should be made only to the Qur'ān and the Ahl al-Bayt whom Allāh Almighty has purified. Hence no versions are valid if they differ from what is right in their view. Thus there is no need to speak about the Isnāds of these versions, this being the first reason to reject these versions and not to consider them authentic at all.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore he claims that there are contradictions in these versions. For instance permission to recite the Qur'ān according to one hadīth in different ahruf was given gradually after many requests, but in another hadīth it was given all at once. In one version Ubayy entered the mosque and saw a man reciting in a way different from his, but in another version it is mentioned that Ubayy was in the mosque and two men entered the mosque and recited in different ways from each other.<sup>3</sup>

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1. al-Khū'ī, al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, pp.177-190.

2. ibid., p.177. He quotes from Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol.IV, pp.438-439, Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far's statement "The Qur'ān has been revealed from One, but the difference comes from the narrators". It is also stated (p.439) that Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh was asked about people's sayings that the Qur'ān was revealed in seven ahruf and he replied "They lied and were enemies of Allāh and it was revealed in one ḥarf from the One".

3. ibid.

Finally he said that the reply was not related to the question in the version relating to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd who is reported as having differed with another person as to whether a certain sūrah should be reckoned as having thirty five or thirty six verses. <sup>C</sup>Alī was beside the Prophet and answered "The Apostle of Allāh commands you to recite as you have been taught".<sup>1</sup>

All in all, in his opinion, there is no reasonable meaning for the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf and it is not understandable.<sup>2</sup>

This view has no firm ground to stand on. First of all it is not agreed outside Shī<sup>C</sup>ite circles that the Ahl al-Bayt are the only references for the Islamic Sharī<sup>C</sup>ah and that the narrations of the Ahl al-Sunnah - including Abū Bakr, <sup>C</sup>Umar and <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, are invalid. Al-Khū<sup>ī</sup>'s approach would rule out a priori all discussions of the ahruf, and from an objective academic point of view there is no entire justification for denying the validity of the hadīth of the Ahl al-Sunnah. It is clearly stated in the Qur'ān:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you..." (S.XLIX, 13).

In any case the differences between the versions in letters or words do not affect the truth of the hadīth, nor can contradictions refute an authentic hadīth.

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1. ibid., p.178.

2. ibid.

Al-Khū'ī himself falls into contradiction when he says:

"Hence we find that the narrators differ in some words of al-Mutanabbī's poems but this difference does not invalidate the existence of the qaṣīdah or its successive transmission (tawātur)."  
In the same way, the differences between the narrators in the details of the Prophet's Hijrah do not contradict the Hijrah itself or its tawātur.<sup>1</sup> If this is so, it is very difficult to see why this principle should not also be applied to the question of the ahruf. As for the objection that there is no relation between the question and the answer (in the hadīth of <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd) this can be answered quite simply by pointing out that the Companions were learning the recitation and counting the verses, because the prophet used to pause on the end of each verse (āyah)<sup>2</sup> and that this was part of the process of teaching. The Companions used to study not more than ten verses at a time to recite and practice.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, having rejected the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, he does not accept the interpretation of the hadīth, but simply uses opposing arguments in an attempt to discredit them all. Despite this, however, he most surprisingly mentions that in his opinion al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī's opinion is closest to the truth, but rejects it,

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1. Bayān, p.158.

2. This is confirmed by a sound hadīth related by Abū Dāwūd and al-Hākim. See al-Albānī, Ṣifat Ṣalāt al-Nabiyy, p.70-71.

3. Ibn Taymiyyah, Fatāwā, vol.XIII, p.402, and Tartib al-Musrad, vol. XVIII, p.9.

because al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī interpreted "Seven" as a symbolic term, and for other reasons.<sup>1</sup> However, he reduced Ibn Qutaybah's views to six. In addition, he says there is a seventh way of reading the Qur'ān which is that upon which all scholars are agreed; he then goes on to say that Ibn Qutaybah does not take this into account and that his seven ways of difference are in fact eight.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in addition to rejecting the premises of Ibn Qutaybah's argument he wishes to show that his arguments are in any case fallacious.

Moreover, contrary to al-Khū'i's claim, the ahādīth have a perfectly feasible meaning which is that of facilitating the recitation and making it easier for the Muslims.<sup>3</sup> The differences of scholars in interpreting these ahādīth do not affect the authenticity of these ahādīth.<sup>4</sup>

However the Shī<sup>C</sup>ite scholar Abū<sup>C</sup> Abd Allāh al-Zinjānī in his book Tārīkh al-Qur'ān quoted the hādīth narrated by <sup>C</sup>Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and many other ahādīth.<sup>5</sup> He chooses the view of al-Ṭabarī as the best interpretation, this referring to the seven ways of recitation using synonyms.<sup>6</sup> Later he mentions that it might be possible to interpret this hādīth as referring to the differences in the

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1. Bayān, pp.191-193.

2. Ibid., p.188.

3. See pp.2-4 of this study.

4. For more information about the authenticity of these hādīths see pp.6-7 of this study.

5. For the text of this hādīth and some others, see al-Zinjānī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān pp.33-37 and pp.1-4 above.

6. al-Zinjānī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.37.



recitation of the Qur'ān, e.g. Imālah, Ishmām and Idghām as they have been narrated by the seven readers.<sup>1</sup> Al-Zinjānī attributed this view to al-Shahrastānī in his Tafsīr.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we can say that we have many sources and references which support and witness the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, which can be put in the following order:

1. The fact that many authentic and sound ahādīth indicate precisely that the Qur'ān has been revealed in seven different ahruf.<sup>3</sup>
2. The discussions and disputes among the Companions about varieties and differences in recitation during the life-time of the prophet, who himself taught them to recite in many different ways from each other.<sup>4</sup>
3. The disputes and quarrels among the successors (Tābi<sup>C</sup>ūn) during the time of the orthodox caliphs, particularly in the time of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.<sup>5</sup>
4. The many examples of differences in recitation which exist in the books of Sunan like those of al-Bukhārī,

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1. ibid., and see pp.16-17 of this study.

2. This Tafsīr is called Mafātīḥ al al-Asrār wa Maṣābīḥ al-Abrār which al-Zinjānī says is a respected Tafsīr. The author of this Tafsīr is Abū al-Fath Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, a theologian and jurist who was born in 477 A.H. and died in 548 A.H. A manuscript copy of this work exists in the Majlis Library, Tehran. See Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.36.

3. See pp.1-7 of this study.

4. ibid., pp.1-2,4-5.

5. See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, ed. A. Jeffery, passim.

Muslim, al-Tirmidhī and others.<sup>1</sup> Moreover in the books of Tafsīr like that of al-Tabarī<sup>2</sup> and books on the history of Qirā'āt and Maṣāḥif like that of Ibn Abī Dāwūd,<sup>3</sup> there are found many different riwāyāt of the readings of the Qur'ān.<sup>4</sup>

5. The qurrā', the readers of the Qur'ān in different ways of recitation, continuously, generation after generation, memorised and taught to their students and followers the qirā'āt, readings of the Qur'ān in different ways according to rules of riwāyāt and Isnād.

In the following chapters we will study these qirā'āt and the conditions governing them and an attempt will be made to discover whether any of them are not based on the Mushaf of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, and whether in this case they may be derived from the ahruf.

In conclusion, we may say that the scholars are virtually unanimous that the Qur'ān has been revealed in seven ahruf, in order to facilitate the reading of the Qur'ān. This apparently came after the Hijrah, when various tribes who spoke a number of different dialects embraced Islam, and found it difficult to abandon their own dialects immediately.

Those who deny the authenticity of the aḥādīth dealing with this subject do not seem to have <sup>objective</sup> any basis for their arguments.

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1. In each book there is a chapter or more on the Qirā'āt under Tafsīr and Fadā'il al-Qur'ān.
  2. al-Tabarī, Jāmi<sup>C</sup> al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān.
  3. See also A. Jeffery, Material for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān, including Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, passim.
  4. al-Qirā'āt Wa'l-Lahajāt, p.5.

Finally although scholars disagree as to the meaning of the ahruf, the most natural interpretation is that they refer to linguistic variations in the manner of reciting the Qur'ān. However it is difficult to commit ourselves to any of the specific definitions of these linguistic variations advanced by various scholars.

## CHAPTER 2

### COMPILATION OF THE QUR'ĀN

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The Prophet - peace be upon him - had scribes whom he used to order to write down the revelation of the Qur'ān on the materials<sup>1</sup> which were available at that time.

It is stated that whenever he received verses or sūras he commanded one of his scribes immediately to record them and instructed them to arrange them in their places in the sūras of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

There are many accounts which support this view, the implication of which is that every revealed verse was written down at the time of its revelation, was put in a pre-ordained order and kept in a safe place.<sup>3</sup>

The scribes who took down the revelation were many; some of them were assigned the task of recording the revelation on a permanent basis, being given the title of 'Kātib al-Wahy', while

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1. These are said to have included palm stalks (<sup>C</sup>usub), thin white stones (likhāf), pieces of wood (alwāh) and shoulder bones (aktāf). See Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.478 and 481, and for more detail on this see pp.43-44 below.

2. Al-Baghawī, Sharh al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.522.

3. al-Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.480

others were normally engaged on other secretarial duties and only seem to have been brought in to take down the revelation very occasionally.<sup>1</sup>

The scribes of the revelation whom the Prophet used to ask to write down the verses and portions of the Qur'ān he used to receive were many and the number of the scribes who used to write for him for secretarial duties was greater.<sup>2</sup>

Certain scholars tried to count them using the sources available to them; Ibn Kathīr counts twenty two,<sup>3</sup> and recently we find the number increased to thirty three<sup>4</sup> or about sixty.<sup>5</sup> The most famous among them are <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, <sup>C</sup>Alī, Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b and Zayd b. Thābit<sup>6</sup> who is specially known as Kātib al-Nabiyy or Kātib al-Wahy.<sup>7</sup>

To ensure that the Qur'ān would not be confused with his own utterances, the Prophet is reported to have ordered his companions to write nothing except the Qur'ān; furthermore he commanded those who

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22, Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb, pp.12-14, al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.V, pp.339-355, al-<sup>C</sup>Iqd al-Farīd, vol.IV, pp.245-247.
  2. al-Musnad, vol.VI, p.250, Kitāb al-Masāhif, p.3, al-Jahshiyārī, Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb, pp.12-14, al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.V, pp.339-355, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22 and al-<sup>C</sup>Iqd al-Farīd vol.IV, pp.245-254.
  3. al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah, vol.V, pp.339-355.
  4. Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Masāhif, pp.15-18.
  5. Kuttāb al-Nabiyy, Third ed., Beirut 1981.
  6. Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb, p.12, al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah, vol.VII, p.145 and Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22.
  7. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.22.

may have written down anything other than the Qur'ān to efface it.<sup>1</sup>

As a result the entire revelation is said to have been gradually secured, kept in a written form and stored in the Prophet's house.<sup>2</sup>

A number of the companions were able to have their own codices in addition to memorising the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup> The most famous among them who are said to have taught many others, are the following, <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, <sup>C</sup>Alī, Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b, Abū al-Dardā', Zayd b. Thābit, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd, Abū Mūsā al-Ash<sup>C</sup>arī<sup>4</sup> Sālim (the mawlā of Abū Hudhayfah) and Mu<sup>C</sup>ādh b. Jabal.<sup>5</sup>

Thus according to these accounts the Qur'ān was memorised by quite a good number of the companions and was all written down in the form which has come to us (i.e. the same verses and sūras in the very same order).<sup>6</sup>

Though the Qur'ān was fully recorded, using all possible writing materials, it was not written in the shape of a muṣḥaf; this was to be done later after the Prophet had passed away.

These records were known as 'al-Kitāb', "the book" even before it took the book form; for instance it is so described in the Qur'anic verse (S.II,2) "This is the book in it is guidance sure, without doubt to those who fear God".

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1. al-Nasā'ī, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.72 and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taqyīd al-<sup>C</sup>Im, pp.29-32.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IV, p.13, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.V, pp.521-522.

3. Kitāb al-Masāḥif, pp.50-88, al-Isābah fī Tamyīz al-Sahābah, vol.II, p.489 and Materials, pp.20-238.

4. Manāhil, vol.I, p.245.

5. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.487, adds these two names to the list given in Manāhil.

6. See for example al-Baghawī, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.518.

The Prophet is also reported as having said before his death:  
"I have left amongst you Muslims that which you will not be misguided if you stick to it; the book of Allah".<sup>1</sup>

The reason for not compiling these records in an official muṣḥaf during the time of the Prophet is explained by al-Baghawī, who states that this was because the abrogation of some verses took place during the period of the revelation of the Qur'ān. When there was no more abrogation and the revelation was sealed, the time had come for the formal compilation to be carried out.<sup>2</sup>

Burton argues against this view on the basis of his rejection of the two modes of mansūkh al-tilāwah.<sup>3</sup> However a stronger argument in its favour would be the fact that it would be pointless to compile the Qur'ān into a bound muṣḥaf until the process of revelation was completed.

Compilation of the Qur'ān during the reigns of Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān

The companions and their followers relied on memorising the Qur'ān, teaching the young and newly converted Muslims the Qur'ān, but in addition they had their personal codices and manuscripts.

The Qur'ān remained uncompiled in official book form until the year 12 A.H. when seventy of the Huffāz were killed in Yamāmah fighting against the self-proclaimed Prophet Musaylimah,<sup>4</sup> the same

1. al-Nawawī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ al-Nawawī, vol.VII, p.184.

2. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.V, p.519.

3. See The Collection of the Qur'ān, Passim. For a further discussion of this question, see also pp.78-90 below.

4. Qurṭubī, vol.I, p.50. See pp.54-55 below for a further discussion of the number killed.



number or forty Huffāz having been killed earlier in the battle of Bi'r Ma<sup>c</sup>ūnah.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>c</sup>Umar came to Abū Bakr with the suggestion that the Qur'ān should be compiled in a single book as a safeguard against the loss of some parts of the records or the death of the Huffāz.

Abū Bakr gave consideration to the matter, thought carefully about it, and agreed with <sup>c</sup>Umar after some hesitation. He then asked Zayd b. Thābit to take on the responsibility of compilation since he had the following qualifications,

1. he was the well known scribe of the revelation (Kātib al-Wahy al-Mashhūr).
2. he was a hāfiz of the Qur'ān.
3. he had checked through the text with the Prophet after the Prophet had recited it in the presence of Gabriel for the last time.
4. he was young, knowledgable, wise and reliable.
5. he was skilled at writing the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Zayd was afraid of carrying out this task as he felt that he could not do something the Prophet had not asked him to do. Abū Bakr finally persuaded him, and he started the work by comparing the Prophet's record with the memorised and written versions of those of the huffāz who were available in Madīnah. He then wrote out the

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1. Tārikh al-Ṭabarī, vol.II, pp.545-549, al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, vol.I, pp.346-350, al-Kāmil, vol.II, pp.171-172, and Bukharī, vol.V, pp.287-8.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.13.

entire text in book form and presented the muṣḥaf to Abū Bakr who received it and kept it in his custody.<sup>1</sup>

The muṣḥaf remained with Abū Bakr until he died, then with ʿUmar until the end of his life and then with Ḥafṣah, the daughter of ʿUmar, and the wife of the Prophet, who was the executor of her father, and was herself a Hāfizah.

This was because ʿUmar had died before the installation of the third Khalīfa.<sup>2</sup> At this time disputes arose about the reading of the Qur'ān among the Qurra' and readers because some of the companions and the followers were teaching students in the cities they were sent to in versions which differed in various ways, and also because the companions were reciting the Qur'ān in the seven ahruf they were permitted to use. By the time of ʿUthmān disputes among the readers became so acute that they were accusing each other of unbelief (kufr). Many complaints were brought before ʿUthmān, urging him to take urgent action before these disputes led to fighting and division among the Muslims. Such disputes occurred in many places, in Madīnah itself,<sup>3</sup> Kūfah, Baṣrah, Syria and in the military camps (ajnād). Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān was in the battle zones of Armenia and Azerbaijan and witnessed the disputes between Muslims as to the reading of the Qur'ān. He became very annoyed at what he had witnessed and came hurriedly and in alarm to Madīnah

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1. Bukharī, vol.VI. p.478.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, pp.10-16.

3. Tabarī, Tafsir, vol.I, p.21, Itqān, vol.I, p.102, al-Maṣāḥif, p.21, and al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.8.

and suggested to ʿUthmān a unified reading of the Qur'ān. He addressed him saying, "O chief of the believers! Save this Ummah before they differ about the Book as the Jews and the Christians did before".<sup>1</sup>

Consequently ʿUthmān called for the Muhājirūn and Anṣār and consulted them, and they all agreed and encouraged him to unify the reading of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

ʿUthmān sent a message to Ḥafṣah saying: "Send us the manuscript of the Qur'ān, so that we may compile the Quranic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscript to you". Ḥafṣah sent it to ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān then ordered Zayd b. Thābit, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥārith b. Hishām to write the manuscripts in perfect copies. ʿUthmān said to the Qurashī men "If you disagree with Zayd b. Thābit on any point in the Qur'ān, write it in the dialect (lisān) of Quraysh as the Qur'ān was revealed in their tongue".<sup>3</sup> They did so and when they had written many copies, ʿUthmān returned the original manuscript to Ḥafṣah.<sup>4</sup>

ʿUthmān sent to every Muslim region one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qurānic materials whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479.

2. al-Kāmil, Vol.III, pp.111-112.

3. For further discussion of this, see Ch.5.

4. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479.

5. ibid.

The companions, the learned men and the leading figures agreed with ʿUthmān and were happy about the decision he had made, including ʿAlī who is reported to have confronted the rebels against ʿUthmān and said to them that ʿUthmān burnt only the maṣāḥif which varied from the final revelation and preserved for them that which was agreed upon<sup>1</sup> and that he did not do anything without consultation and the consent of all companions, and furthermore added that if he was in the place of ʿUthmān he would have done the same thing.<sup>2</sup>

In fact Muslims in general admired ʿUthmān's action and agreed to it unanimously with the exception of Ibn Masʿūd, because he united them in one muṣḥaf, cleansed from any abrogated versions, and freed it from any Āḥād reading or any interpretation which may have been added to the text.<sup>3</sup>

#### Methods adopted in this compilation

We may reasonably assume that the scribes made every possible investigation into the text of the Qur'ān in order to secure the authenticity of the written form compared with memorised versions, that they ensured that all the verses and sūras they wrote down were revised according to the final revelation, that they were

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1. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.VII, p.171.

2. al-Kāmil vol.III, p.112. For a discussion of the position of ʿAlī in Shīʿite sources, see below, pp.90-93.

3. Manāḥil, vol.I, pp.260-261.

convinced that the text was as it had been recited by the Prophet in the final revelation, and that there were no abrogated verses in the mushaf (for example Sūrat al-Jumu<sup>h</sup>ah S.62, Āyah 9, where the word فامضوا is sometimes said to be read فاسعوا but the authentic one is the first, the latter having been abrogated in the final revelation).<sup>1</sup>

Thus the people agreed unanimously with <sup>C</sup>Uthmān since his new compilation was in accordance with the first compilation of Abū Bakr. It is stated in a sound ḥadīth (riwāyah ṣaḥīḥah) that the reading of Abū Bakr, <sup>C</sup>Umar, <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, <sup>C</sup>Alī, Zayd b. Thābit, the Muhajirūn and the Anṣār was the same, and was the common reading which was taught to them after the final revelation. The Prophet used to read the Qur'ān with Gabriel once in every Ramādān, but in the last Ramādān before he passed away he read it twice. Zayd b. Thābit bore witness to this final revelation and read it with the Prophet and wrote it down for him in this way.

Hence this reading was named the reading of Zayd b. Thābit because he wrote it and read it to the Prophet and taught his students what he had been taught. For this reason also he was in charge of the compilation for the first compilation and the second one.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Manāhil, vol.I, pp.257-260.

2. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.V, pp.525-526. It is narrated to

<sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd, also that he witnessed the final revelation.

The scribes of the compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān were four, according to Bukhārī.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Abī Dāwūd (316/928) narrates on the authority of Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (110/729) that the scribes whom <sup>C</sup>Uthmān instructed to compile the Qur'ān were twelve, being from the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, and that Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b was one of them. Ibn Sīrīn adds; "Kuthayyir b. Aflaḥ told me - and he was one of the scribes - that when they differed in writing something they used to postpone writing it. I think that this postponing was to make sure that it corresponded to the final revealed version".<sup>2</sup>

It is said also that the scribes of this revelation were only two, Zayd b. Thābit and Sa<sup>C</sup>īd b. al<sup>C</sup>Āṣ, for the reason that Zayd was the best in writing and Sa<sup>C</sup>īd was more eloquent in pronunciation.<sup>3</sup>

Those who say that the scribes were twelve include scribes who dictated and others who wrote, but do not mention all of their names. al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī found out that nine of them are mentioned in various places by Ibn Abī Dāwūd and gives a list of them.<sup>4</sup> They are, in addition to the four mentioned in Bukhārī,<sup>5</sup> Mālīk b. Abī-<sup>C</sup>Āmir (grandfather of Mālīk b. Anas), Kuthayyir b. Aflaḥ, Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b,

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1. vol.VI, p.479, see also p.38 of this chapter and al-Kāmil, vol.III, p.112.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.19 and al-Maṣāḥif, pp.25-26.

3. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.19.

4. ibid. and al-Maṣāḥif, pp.25-26.

5. vol.VI, p.479, and see p.38 above.

Anas b. Mālīk and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās. Ibn Abī Dawūd states that ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb commanded that "no one should dictate in our maṣāḥif except those who belonged to Quraysh and Thaḳīf".<sup>1</sup>

al-ʿAsqalānī argues that in fact there was no one from Thaḳīf among the scribes, as they were either from Quraysh or the Anṣār.<sup>2</sup> He tries to evaluate these views and suggests that it was at the beginning of the compilation when Zayd and Saʿīd were the sole scribes, but when help was needed to write out more copies to be sent to the provinces, the other scribes were added.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Masʿūd is said to have been annoyed when he was not asked to join the committee set up to compile the Qurʾān, feeling that he had been ignored or insulted. Ibn Masʿūd is quoted as having said that he had been taught seventy sūras, by the Prophet while Zayd b. Thābit was a young boy playing with children.<sup>4</sup> As a result Ibn Masʿūd is said to have refused to give his muṣḥaf back to ʿUthmān to be burnt, and to have told his students to follow him in this. Ibn Abī Dāwūd states however that Ibn Masʿūd reviewed his decision and gave his muṣḥaf back to ʿUthmān.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Maṣāḥif, p.11.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.19.

3. ibid. For a modern attempt to establish the names of the other scribes, see Maʿ al-Maṣāḥif, p.92 and Dirāsāt fī al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah, p.59.

4. al-Musnad, vol.V, p.325, Fath-al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.19, Qurtubī, vol.I, pp.52-52, and Ibn Saʿd al-Ṭabaqāt, vol.II, p.444.

5. al-Maṣāḥif, p.18, see also Qurtubī, vol.I, p.53, p.52, and al-Tamhīd wa-l-Bayān fī Maqatal al-Shahīd ʿUthmān. The author Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Abī Bakr adds "but the followers of Ibn Masʿūd did not agree with him then Ibn Masʿūd asked ʿUthmān for permission to return to Madīnah as he did not wish to stay in Kūfah. He was given permission and came to Madīnah some months before he passed away".

The reason for ʿUthmān not including the name of Ibn Masʿūd is discussed by al-ʿAsqalānī who points out that Ibn Masʿūd was not in Madīnah at the time that ʿUthmān appointed the committee. He was in Kūfah, while ʿUthmān was in a hurry to take urgent action for the compilation of the Qur'ān in order to put an end to the disputes which were taking place in different provinces. Furthermore, ʿUthmān did nothing, except to reproduce the very same pages compiled by the command of Abū Bakr in one maṣḥaf, and Zayd b. Thābit was in charge of compilation on both occasions, in the times of Abū Bakr and of ʿUthmān. Thus Zayd had the privilege of being a scribe of the revelation and the man who was in charge of the first compilation and of the second.<sup>1</sup>

#### The materials of inscription of the Qur'ān

The materials available at the time of the first compilation during the lifetime of the Prophet are said to have included the following:

1. Palm stalks (ʿusub)
2. Thin white stones (likhāf)
3. Boards (alwāḥ)
4. Scapula bones (aktāf)
5. Saddles (aqtāb)
6. Leather (adīm)
7. Pieces of cloth (riqāʿ)<sup>2</sup>

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.19.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.478-481, Miftāḥ al-Saʿādah, vol.II, p.292 and al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz, vol.I, p.64.



8. Potsherds (khazaf)
9. Shells (ṣadaf)<sup>1</sup>
10. Ribs (adlā<sup>c</sup>)<sup>2</sup>
11. Parchment (raqq)<sup>3</sup>

When the compilation took place during the reign of Abū Bakr the materials were not similar to those of the first compilation.

al-<sup>c</sup>Asqalānī states that Abū Bakr was the first one to compile the Qur'ān on paper<sup>4</sup> and in one muṣḥaf. He supports his view by a version attributed to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (124/741).<sup>5</sup> He points out that it is not authentic that Zayd wrote for Abū Bakr on leather and palm leaf stalks, and that he rewrote it for <sup>c</sup>Umar on paper.<sup>6</sup> He adds that the correct version is that the Qur'ān was written on leather and palm leaf stalks before the time of Abū Bakr and it was rewritten on parchment during the reign of Abū Bakr.<sup>7</sup>

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1. al-Muharrar al-Wajīz, vol.I, p.64.
  2. Ibn al-Baqillānī, al-Tamhīd, p.222.
  3. al-Awā'il, vol.I, p.214. The author interprets raqq as waraq which was parchment at the time. In this connection also it is reported that individuals used to come with a waraqah to the Prophet who used to ask one of the scribes to write on it for him. See al-Bayhaqī, al-Sunan al-Kubrā, vol.VI, p.16.
  4. Clearly this is an anachronism, since even papyrus was not in use at this period in Arabia. Presumably what is intended is parchment.
  5. Fath<sup>h</sup> al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.16.
  6. ibid.
  7. ibid.

In a modern study it is argued that the oldest muṣḥaf in existence is that found in the Mosque of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in Egypt. It is written on parchment which seems to be the best thing for an important thing like the Qur'ān which is intended to have a long life.<sup>1</sup> Although papyrus was of course available in Egypt which is not far from Arabia, none of the old maṣāḥif which exist today use it.<sup>2</sup> Paper was not known in the Islamic world before (134/751).<sup>3</sup>

#### The sending of the maṣāḥif to the provinces

The number of maṣāḥif sent to the cities is not specified. In the old sources no fixed number is mentioned. However al-Bukhārī on the authority of Anas b. Mālik says "ʿUthmān sent to every Muslim province a copy of what they had copied" "Ilā kull ufuq min Āfāq al-Muslimīn".<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Abī Dawūd states that "ʿUthmān sent a muṣḥaf to every Muslim battlefield"<sup>5</sup> and "he distributed maṣāḥif to the people".<sup>6</sup>

Likewise in many other primary or secondary sources no reference is made to a particular number of maṣāḥif.

Later on reference is made to four copies with or without mentioning names of cities. Those who mentioned the number of

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1. al-Zafzāf, al-Taʿrīf bi al-Qur'ān wa-al-Ḥadīth, pp.84-85.

2. ibid.

3. al-Thaʿālībī, Thimār al-Qulūb, p.543 and Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif, pp.160 and 218.

4. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479.

5. al-Maṣāḥif, p.20.

6. ibid., p.12.

maṣāḥif differ in the names of the cities to which the maṣāḥif were sent.

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha<sup>ḥ</sup>ī (d.96/714) is quoted as supporting the view that the number of maṣāḥif sent by <sup>Ḥ</sup>Uthmān was four.<sup>1</sup>

Hamzah, one of the seven canonical readers, stated that his muṣḥaf was copied from the Kūfan muṣḥaf which was one of the four maṣāḥif sent to the cities.<sup>2</sup>

Abū <sup>Ḥ</sup>Amr al-Dānī (444/1052) states that there were four copies of which three were sent to Kūfah, Baṣrah and Makkah, while the fourth copy was kept in Madīnah in the custody of <sup>Ḥ</sup>Uthmān. al-Dānī adds that this is the opinion of the vast majority of scholars.<sup>3</sup> al-<sup>Ḥ</sup>Asqalānī adds one to the previous four stating that the famous saying is they are five.<sup>4</sup>

According to Ibn al-Bāqillānī they are five, a copy being sent to Kūfah, Baṣrah, Yaman and Baḥrayn, while <sup>Ḥ</sup>Uthmān kept a copy for himself.<sup>5</sup>

He is followed by al-Qaṣṭallānī who opts for the number mentioned by al-<sup>Ḥ</sup>Asqalānī.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn <sup>Ḥ</sup>Āshir argues that five maṣāḥif were sent to Makkah, Damascus (shām), Baṣrah, Kūfah and Madīnah, while <sup>Ḥ</sup>Uthmān kept a

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1. al-Maṣāḥif, p.35.

2. ibid., p.34.

3. al-Muqni<sup>ḥ</sup>, p.11 and al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.74.

4. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.20.

5. Nukat al-Intiṣār, p.359.

6. Irshād al-Sārī, vol.VII, p.535.

sixth copy for himself which is known as "al-Imām".<sup>1</sup>

al-Zurqānī tried to weigh the evidence for the existence of copies five and six. He suggested that the scholars who counted them as five did not count the personal copy of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, and he therefore supported the view which counted them as six.<sup>2</sup>

Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 250/864) says: "<sup>C</sup>Uthmān sent seven maṣāḥif, keeping one in Madīnah and distributing the rest to Makkah, Damascus, Yemen, Bahrayn, Baṣrah, and Kūfah."<sup>3</sup>

He was followed in this by Ibn <sup>C</sup>Asākir (d. 571/1175)<sup>4</sup> and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372)<sup>5</sup> except that the latter puts Egypt in the place of Bahrayn.

In Fadā'il al-Qur'ān he gives the list quoted above, but in the later al-Bidāyah he mentions Egypt in the place of Bahrayn.

al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī in his book Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab<sup>6</sup> supports this view, choosing the names suggested by Ibn Kathīr in his al-Bidāyah.

Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429) opts for the number mentioned by Abū Ḥātim, but adds that there was an eighth copy which was that retained by <sup>C</sup>Uthmān himself which was known as al-Muṣḥaf al-Imām.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Manāhil al-<sup>C</sup>Irfān, vol.I, p.403.

2. ibid.

3. al-Maṣāḥif, p.34 and al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.73.

4. Tahdhīb Tarīkh Dimashq, vol.I, p.44.

5. al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol.III, p.216.

6. vol.II, pp.20-21.

7. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.7.

Finally, al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī (284/897) counts nine copies adding two places, Egypt and al-Jazīrah, to the list given by Abū Hātim.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion we may remark that the most reliable evidence suggests that the number of maṣāḥif was six. The reason for this is that all of the scholarly works on Qirā'āt refer constantly to the maṣāḥif of Madīnah, Makkah, Damascus (Shām), Kūfah and Baṣrah and al-Muṣḥaf al-Imām, and never mention any other muṣḥaf.<sup>2</sup>

This is also supported by the fact that <sup>C</sup>Uthmān is said to have entrusted five Qurra' with the maṣāḥif. He appointed Zayd b. Thābit to teach the people of Madīnah, and sent <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Sā'ib to Makkah, al-Mughīrah b. Shihāb to Shām, Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī to Kūfah and <sup>C</sup>Āmir b. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Qays to Baṣrah.<sup>3</sup>

Then their students and followers taught the following generations in the same way that they had been taught.<sup>4</sup> Thus there seems to be no place for Egypt, Baḥrayn, Yemen or al-Jazīrah since there is not one piece of evidence pointing in these directions, while the assumption that there were seven or more maṣāḥif is less likely.

The earliest reports which do not mention a fixed number of cities can be interpreted in favour of the argument for five cities since these were the main places in which textual disputes were taking place at that time.

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1. Tārīkh al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī, vol.II, p.1471.

2. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, pp.98-131 and Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān pp.264-300.

3. Manāhil, vol.I, pp.403-404 and Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Maṣāḥif, pp.90-91.

4. Manāhil, vol.I, pp.403-404.

The addition of a sixth muṣḥaf may be reasonable in that it takes into account <sup>C</sup>Uthmān's personal copy. This is supported by the fact that when <sup>C</sup>Uthmān was killed his personal muṣḥaf was before him and he was reading.<sup>1</sup> There are very early references for the muṣḥaf of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān which is known as al-Imām. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām quotes from this muṣḥaf and mentions that he has seen it.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī also is reported to have seen this muṣḥaf.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover the muṣḥaf of Madīnah is different from that of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān himself. In this respect al-Shāṭibī states that Nāfi<sup>C</sup> used to quote the muṣḥaf of Madīnah while Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd used to quote that of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.<sup>4</sup>

The dating of the compilation of the Qur'ān in the reign of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān

In all ahādīth which mention the compilation of the Qur'ān in the time of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, there is no trace of any suggested date other than that the event took place after Hudhayfah had witnessed the dispute among the Qurrah' in the battlezone of Armenia.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Tamhīd wa-al-Bayān, pp.138-139.

2. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, pp.264-300 and Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, p.89.

3. Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, p.89.

4. Kitāb <sup>C</sup>Aqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣā'id, p.12 and Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, p.89.

5. Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, pp.59-61.

Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.481,

and Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, pp.11-26.

al-Ṭabarī is the first who suggests a fixed date for this event. He states that it was in (24/644).<sup>1</sup> al-ʿAsqalānī opted for this opinion and tried to support it by other reports. He says; "This event took place in the year twenty five of the Hijrah in the third or second year of ʿUthmān's installation as Khalīfah".<sup>2</sup> He quotes Ibn Abī Dāwūd on the authority of Muṣʿab b. Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, as saying that "ʿUthmān preached and said O People, only fifteen years elapsed since the Prophet passed away and you differ in the recitation of the Qur'ān".<sup>3</sup> al-ʿAsqalānī argues that the installation of ʿUthmān took place after ʿUmar's death at the end of Dhū'l-Hijjah, in the year twenty three of the Hijrah, i.e. twelve years and nine months after the death of the Prophet, and that if this is so then the compilation must have taken place two years and three months after his installation. He adds that in another version it is given as thirteen years instead of fifteen:<sup>4</sup> he compares the two views and concludes that the event must have taken place one year after the installation of ʿUthmān which can be taken as the end of the twenty fourth or the beginning of the twenty fifth year of the Hijrah.<sup>5</sup> However both versions quoted by al-ʿAsqalānī are said not to be authentic.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, if they were sound,

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1. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.IV, p.246; he also mentions another version which suggests the year 26 A.H.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.17.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

5. ibid. In this he was followed by al-Qaṣṭallānī, Irshād al-Sārī vol.VII, p.534, al-Suyūṭī, Itqān, vol.I, p.170.

6. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.59.

the scholars would have accepted his opinion unanimously, and no other suggestions would have been brought into the discussion.

al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī also says "It is claimed by some of our contemporaries that the event took place in the year thirty of the Hijrah", but he does not quote any reference or give any evidence.<sup>1</sup>

The contemporary whom he quotes as suggesting the year thirty of the Hijrah is Ibn al-Jazarī, who fixed this year in his book al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr.\* In fact Ibn al-Athīr who is earlier than Ibn al-Jazarī mentions the same date, although he does not give any reference to support his view.<sup>2</sup> He is followed in this by some other scholars.<sup>3</sup> Some scholars mention both dates without opting for either of them.<sup>4</sup>

In some western scholars' view the event took place in (33/653) according to their dating of the conquest of Armenia. Hence the compilation of the Qur'ān would have taken place at that time.<sup>5</sup> There is one fact, however which stands against this view, which is that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd, who is reported to have refused to give his muṣḥaf back to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān and to have told his students not to hand their maṣāḥif over to be burnt,<sup>6</sup> is said to have died at the end of the

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1. Fath, vol.IX, p.17.

2. al-Kāmil, vol.III, pp.111-112.

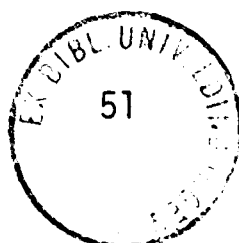
3. For example Abū al-Fidā', al-Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al-Bashar, vol.I, p.167, Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Abī Bakr, al-Tamhīd wa-al-Bayān, p.50.

4. For example, Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.58.

5. Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, p.64.

6. al-Maṣāḥif, pp.13-18.

\* Vol.I, p.7.





year (32/652),<sup>1</sup> or in 33 A.H.<sup>2</sup> The following scholars agree that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd died at Madīnah in (32 A.H.). They are: al-Ṭabarī,<sup>3</sup> al-Balādhurī (279/892),<sup>4</sup> al-<sup>C</sup>Āmirī,<sup>5</sup> Ibn Qutaybah,<sup>6</sup> al-Dhahabī,<sup>7</sup> and Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr.<sup>8</sup> If this date is correct the above dating for the compilation must be too late, and these events must have taken place earlier. However, since this compilation has been connected with the conquest of Armenia in which Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān was present, the narrations differed in dating the event. In fact there were many campaigns of conquest in Armenia, and Hudhayfah himself participated in three of them.<sup>9</sup> The first date mentioned, as narrated by Abū Mikhnaf, is 24 A.H.<sup>10</sup> Then al-Ṭabarī states that Hudhayfah was directed to the conquest of

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1. Ghāyat al-Nihāyah, vol.I, p.459.

2. al-Isābah, vol.II, p.369, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, vol.VI, p.28.

al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī attributes to Abū Nu<sup>C</sup>aym and others the year 32 A.H., and the year 33 A.H. to Yahyā b. Bukayr, see Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, as above.

3. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.IV, p.308.

4. Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol.I, p.526.

5. al-Riyād al-Mustatāba, pp.190-192.

6. al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ārif, p.109.

7. Tārīkh al-Islām, vol.II, p.104.

8. al-Istī<sup>C</sup>āb, vol.II, p.324.

9. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.IV, p.307.

10. ibid.,

al-Ṭabarī then adds that it is narrated by others that the event was in 26 A.H. Ibn al-Athīr states that it was in 25 A.H., al-Kāmil, vol.III, p.83.

al-Bāb (Darband) as a help to <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān b. Rabī<sup>C</sup>ā in the year (30/650).<sup>1</sup> al-Tabarī who mentions some small details here and in other places does not mention anything about the maṣāḥif. However Ibn al-Athīr states that Hudhayfah, when he returned after this conquest, told <sup>C</sup>Uthmān what he had witnessed in the battlefield among the Qurra'. Consequently <sup>C</sup>Uthmān consulted the companions who agreed with him to compile the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> Two years later (32/650) Hudhayfah was in that region leading the people of Kūfah.<sup>3</sup> In conclusion the first narration of Abū Mikhnaḥ does not seem to be authentic, for al-Balādhurī (279/892) on one occasion quotes it, but in his opinion it is not the best one. The other versions he gives do not suggest any fixed date,<sup>4</sup> although they correspond with the events detailed in the conquest of the year (30/650), as mentioned in other sources.<sup>5</sup>

Leaving aside the issues raised by the death of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd in the year 32 A.H. it is reasonable to opt for the opinion that the event of the compilation took place in the year (30/650) which is suggested by Ibn al-Athīr<sup>6</sup> and supported by Ibn al-Jazarī<sup>7</sup> and followed by some other scholars.<sup>8</sup>

1. Tārīkh al-Tabarī, vol.IV, p.281.

2. al-Kāmil, vol.III, pp.111-112.

3. Tārīkh al-Tabarī, vol.IV, pp.306-307, al-Kāmil, vol.III, pp.131-133.

4. Futūḥ al-Bulḍān, pp.277-288.

5. Tārīkh al-Tabarī, vol.IV, pp.306-307, al-Kāmil, vol.III, pp.131-133.

6. al-Kāmil, vol.III, pp.111-112.

7. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.7.

8. See p.52 above.

### The validity of Abū Bakr's compilation

Some scholars argue that ʿUmar was the first who compiled the Qur'ān. In support of this they quote an account given by Ibn Saʿd (230/844).<sup>1</sup> It is reported also that ʿUmar asked about a verse, and when he was informed that it has been preserved in the memory of a certain man who was killed on the day of Yamāmah, he ordered the Qur'ān to be compiled in one muṣḥaf.<sup>2</sup> He asked every person who had learned anything from the Prophet to bring it, and he would not accept anything except when two witnesses testified to it.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore it is argued that if Abū Bakr had participated in the process of the compilation it would have become an official muṣḥaf for the state, which it was not, since if it were it would not have been transferred to Ḥafṣah daughter of ʿUmar, but would have passed into the custody of ʿUthmān.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, it is said that Abū Bakr did not live after the Battle of Yamāmah for more than fifteen months, which, it is argued, was not enough time for a great task like that of the compilation of the Qur'ān. Moreover among the Qurra' killed in this occasion, there was not such a considerable number of great Qurra' that it might be feared that some parts of the Qur'ān would be lost by their death.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol.III, p.2.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.166.

3. ibid.

4. Concluding Essay, p.14, ʿAbd al-Qādir, Nazrah ʿĀmmah fī Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmi, pp.90-91.

5. Concluding Essay, pp.14-15.

Furthermore the Qur'ān was committed to writing during the lifetime of the Prophet<sup>1</sup> as discussed above.

However, in answer to these arguments it could be said that the role of <sup>C</sup>Umar was to suggest the compiling of the Qur'ān in one book to Abū Bakr and to assist him in this. According to the hadīth discussed above he persuaded both Abū Bakr and Zayd b. Thābit and supervised the work of compilation. The muṣḥaf then came into <sup>C</sup>Umar's custody after his installation and remained with him until his death, when it was then transferred to his daughter Ḥafṣah because she was his executor. This does not mean that it was a personal copy belonging to <sup>C</sup>Umar himself, because he died before the installation of the succeeding Khalīfah.

The time-scale is quite reasonable for the compilation of the Qur'ān, especially if we take into account the fact that Zayd was experienced in the compilation of the Qur'ān as he used to write down the revelation for the Prophet, and because many people rallied round to help him in the task, which he carried out with the assistance of the companions who had memorised the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore the lists of Qurrah' killed at the Battle of Yamāmah do indeed include many learned men like Sālim the Mawlā of Abū Hudhayfah, Thābit b. Qays b. al-Shammās, Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū Dijānah Simāk b. Kharshah and many others.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathīr counted over fifty of them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>C</sup>Abd al-Qādir,  
1. / Nazrah <sup>C</sup>Āmmah fī Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī, pp.90-91.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.477.

3. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.VI, pp.334-340.

4. ibid. See also p.76 below.

Even if their number were not so great, the fact remains that there was still fear of missing more learned Qurra', since there would be further battles which would inevitably cause the death of others, while there was always the danger that the younger Qurra' might fail to preserve some part of the revelation.

Moreover, even though the Qur'ān may have existed in written form during the lifetime of the Prophet, this would not have allayed the fear, since it was not compiled in a book form, but was written on a variety of materials.<sup>1</sup>

Finally the riwāyah of Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d<sup>2</sup> and al-Suyūṭī<sup>3</sup> do not contradict that of al-Bukhārī<sup>4</sup> which is attributed to Abū Bakr, if we consider that <sup>c</sup>Umar was the one who suggested it to Abū Bakr, and that he used to help Zayd b. Thābit and supervise the compilation.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.238.

2. al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol.III, p.2.

3. Itqān, vol.I, p.166.

4. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.476-477.

5. ibid. Ibn Abū Dāwūd in his al-Maṣāḥif, p.6, states that

Abū Bakr appointed <sup>c</sup>Umar and Zayd b. Thābit to compile the Qur'ān and told them to sit in front of the mosque and to write down what two witnesses testified to be part of the Qur'ān. This version is said not to be authentic (Itqan, vol.I, p.167). Jeffery in his Concluding Essay, p.14, argues that this contradiction indicates that Abū Bakr did not compile any official muṣḥaf, but according to the authentic tradition of Bukhārī, as we have seen, the suggestion came from <sup>c</sup>Umar who persuaded Abū Bakr.

### Dating of the compilation during Abū Bakr's reign

The compilation of the Qur'ān during the reign of Abū Bakr took place after the battle of Yamāmah.<sup>1</sup> This is said to have been in 11 A.H.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathīr quotes Ibn Qānī<sup>C</sup> as having said that it was at the end of this year.<sup>3</sup> This date is supported by Ibn Ḥazm who states that the conquest of Yamāmah was seven months and six days later after the installation of Abū Bakr.<sup>4</sup> Some other scholars mention that it was in 12 A.H. Ibn Kathīr attributes this date to a group of biographers and chroniclers.<sup>5</sup> He tries to reconcile these opinions by suggesting that the conquest began in 11 A.H., and ended in 12 A.H.,<sup>6</sup> but finally opts for the year 12 A.H.. as this date, according to him, is the most widely accepted.<sup>7</sup>

In the light of the above discussion it seems difficult to accept the argument of some researchers who throw doubts on the compilation of Abū Bakr on the grounds that there is no agreement on the date of the day of Yamāmah, i.e. whether it was in the 11th or 12th year of the Hijrah.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.477.
  2. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.III, pp.281-301.
  3. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.VI, p.326.
  4. Jumal Futūḥ al-Islām, p.341.
  5. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.VI, p.226.
  6. ibid.
  7. ibid., p.332.
  8. Concluding Essay. p.14.

### The number of Qurra' slain

The number of slain is estimated to be between six hundred<sup>1</sup> and seven hundred Muslims.<sup>2</sup> al-Ṭabarī states that among them were over three hundred men of the Muhājirūn and Anṣār,<sup>3</sup> while Ibn Kathīr quotes Khalīfah b. Khayyāt (240/854) as having said that the total of Muslims slain was four hundred and fifty men, among them fifty from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār.<sup>4</sup>

In the opinion of some scholars all seven hundred men were Qurra', while others consider the number seventy to be correct.<sup>5</sup> However it is certain that a considerable number of Qurra' were slain at Yamāmah. As ʿUmar is reported to have said "Casualties were heavy among the Qurra' of the Qur'ān on the day of the Battle of Yamāmah".<sup>6</sup>

Before leaving the subject of the compilations of Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān we should consider the view of Burton that neither of these compilations took place.<sup>7</sup> This view is based on the opinion that neither of these events are logically necessary in order to account for the existence of the muṣḥaf as we have it today. However to maintain this theory in practice means to deny the validity of such an immense number of accounts to the contrary that Burton's view is surely untenable. In addition the account given here which is based on a consideration of the sources provides a logical and inherently reasonable account of a historical process.

1. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.III, p.296.

2. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.50.

3. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.III, p.296.

4. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.VI, p.340.

5. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.50.

6. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.477.

7. Burton, The Collection of the Qur'ān, p.239.

### The arrangement of the sūras

The sūras of the Qur'ān were not arranged chronologically as they were revealed. They were arranged differently; for instance sūrah II was revealed in Madīnah after the Hijrah while sūrat al-<sup>C</sup>Alaq (XLVI) was the first sūrah revealed in Makkah.<sup>1</sup> If the arrangement of the muṣḥaf were chronological, sūrat al-<sup>C</sup>Alaq would have been the first sūrah in the muṣḥaf. There are also some verses revealed in Madīnah which were put in Makkan sūras.<sup>2</sup> However all scholars agree unanimously that the verses were arranged and put in their order according to the revelation.<sup>3</sup>

There is an argument among the scholars as to whether the sūras were arranged according to the revelation (tawqīf) or by the endeavour of the companions (ijtihād).

Some scholars argue that the sūras were arranged by the companions, because of the different arrangements of their personal maṣāḥif. It is said that the muṣḥaf of <sup>C</sup>Alī was arranged chronologically, while the muṣḥaf of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd began with al-Baqarah, then al-Nisā', then Āl <sup>C</sup>Imrān, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Others say that ijtihād took place only in limited areas. They mean by this that the Qur'ān in its arrangement is divided into four categories according to the length of the sūras, i.e. al-Ṭiwāl, al-Mi'īn, al-Mathānī and al-Mufaṣṣal,<sup>5</sup> and in their opinion ijtihād was only in the arrangement of the sūras of each category, while all agreed about the order and contents of these four categories.<sup>6</sup>

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1. al-Zuhri, Kitāb Tanzīl al-Qur'ān, p.23.

2. Itqān, vol.I, pp.38-47, Qurtubī, vol.I, p.61 and Ibn Taymiyyah, Daqā'iq al-Tafsīr, vol.I, p.13.

3. More discussion will be forthcoming in pp.66-69 in this chapter.

4. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.59, al-Burhān, vol.I, p.256, Itqān, vol.I, p.176, Asrār Tartīb al-Qur'ān, p.68.

5. Itqān, vol.I, pp.179-180.

6. al-Burhān, vol.I, p.237 and Itqān, vol.I, p.176.



Others are of the opinion that all sūras were arranged according to the revelation, except for the one case of sūras VII and IX. In this they rely on the following ḥadīth: <sup>c</sup>Uthmān was asked why sūrat al-Tawbah is put after sūrat al-Anfāl, and why there is no basmalah between them. He replied that it was because their theme is one, and because the Prophet passed away without informing them where to put the basmalah.<sup>1</sup>

This opinion has been refuted on the grounds that there are many evidences which indicate that the arrangement of the sūras is according to revelation without a single exception. Here are some of them as they have been reported in books of the sunan.

a. A delegation came to the Prophet in Madīnah, and one of them, Abū Aws reported the Prophet as having said "I did not want to come without completing the parts of the Qur'ān I recite daily".

They asked the companions "How do you divide the Qur'ān for the recitation"? They replied "We divide them three sūras, five sūras, seven sūras, nine sūras, eleven sūras, thirteen sūras, and the part of al-Mufaṣṣal from S.XXXVIII (Qāf) to the end."<sup>2</sup>

b. Zayd b. Thābit the scribe of the revelation said: "We were compiling and arranging the Qur'ān from the fragments, in front of Allah's Apostle".<sup>3</sup>

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1. al-Musnad, vol.I, pp.398-399.

2. Tartīb Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol.XVIII, p.29, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol.II, pp.114-116.

3. al-Hākim, vol.II, p.229, al-Murshid, pp.44 and 61, Itqān, vol.I, p.172, c.f. Tartīb Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.30.

c. The basmalah was a sign for the sealing of the sūras. It is stated by Ibn ʿAbbās that the Prophet used not to know that a sūrah had been sealed until the revelation came to him with "In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful"; when it was revealed he knew that the sūrah was sealed.<sup>1</sup>

al-Nīsābūrī (828/1424) in his Tafsīr reports that whenever the Prophet received a sūrah he used to ask the scribe to put it in its place.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of the above the compilation during the reign of Abū Bakr can only have consisted of compiling it in one book, not of arranging the sūras.<sup>3</sup> The same thing applies to the compilation of ʿUthmān. As Ibn al-Bāqillānī puts it,

"The whole Qur'ān, whose compilation and writing Allah commanded, excluding the abrogated verses, is what is contained in this muṣḥaf [of ʿUthmān]. It is the same arrangement and style revealed to the Prophet in the very same manner of verses and sūras with no difference in word order, and the Ummah has received from the Prophet the arrangement of every verse and sūrah, and their places, as they have received the recitation of the Qur'ān."<sup>4</sup>

Referring to (S.LXXXV, 17) "It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it". Ibn Ḥazm concludes that the Qur'ān in all arrangements of its letters, words, verses and sūras is as

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1. Sunan Abī Dawūd, vol.I, p.291, al-Hākim, vol.I, p.231, Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.522 and al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.35.
  2. Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa-Raghā'ib al-Furqān, vol.I, p.32.
  3. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.502.
  4. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.45, Itqān, vol.I, p.175.

revealed by Allāh to his Prophet who taught the people accordingly. Thus there is no one who can change anything.<sup>1</sup>

Some scholars say that the arrangement of the sūras of the Qur'ān in the muṣḥaf has features which prove that it is tawqīf: First: the arrangement according to the beginning of the sūras with letters like al-Hawāmīm, (seven sūras begin with Hāmīm (S.XL to S.XLVI)).

Second: the agreement of the beginning of a sūrah with the end of its predecessor, for example the end of sūrah I and the beginning of sūrah II.

Third: al-Wazn fī al-Lafz, (similarities of verse endings or fawāṣil), i.e. the end of sūrah CXI (masad) and the beginning of sūrah CXII which ends in Aḥad.

Fourth: the similarity between sūras in general like al-Duhā XCIII and al-Inshirāh (XCIV).<sup>2</sup>

The differences between the maṣāḥif of the companions are explained as being due to the fact that they were personal copies. If it so happened that during the absence of one of them a sūrah or more was revealed he would write it whenever it seemed convenient to him.<sup>3</sup>

We do not know about any of these maṣāḥif through an authentic chain, and nothing which is said about them should be accepted as a fact. Various contradictory accounts are given of the order of sūras

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1. Ibn Ḥazm, al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām, vol.IV, p.93.

2. al-Burhān, vol.I, p.260, Asrār Tartīb al-Qur'ān, p.71.

3. Muqaddimatān p.32 and Manāhil, vol.I, pp.248-249.

in various maṣāḥif,<sup>1</sup> but in any case they do not correspond to the version of the final revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Finally the ḥadīth which ascribes to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān the arrangement of sūras VIII and IX is said to be not authentic, and has been criticised on the two levels of its chain and its text. The chain includes a narrator, Yazīd al-Fārisī, who is unknown and is regarded as weak by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.<sup>3</sup> The text (matn) of the ḥadīth is in contradiction to the authentic reports.

Aḥmad Shākīr argues that "This ḥadīth is very weak and, in fact has no basis in its isnād. In addition its text throws doubts on the basmalah at the beginning of sūras as though <sup>C</sup>Uthmān had added to it or omitted some part of it as he liked, veneration be to him."<sup>4</sup>

Muḥammad Rashīd Ridā adopted the same opinion before Shākīr, stating that "a ḥadīth narrated just by a single man is not accepted as regards the arrangement of the Qur'ān, for which successive narration is necessary".<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere he says "An account narrated by a man like this, which is unique to him, is not sound and should not be accepted for the arrangement of the Qur'ān which is transmitted with tawātur",<sup>6</sup> and says that it is impossible that all sūras were arranged except these two

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1. al-Fihrist, pp.29-30.

2. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.60.

3. Bulūgh al-Amānī, vol.XVIII, p.155.

4. Musnad, vol.I, pp.329-330.

5. al-Manār, vol.IX, p.585, and Musnad vol.I, p.330.

6. Hāshiyahon Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.12 and Musnad, vol.I, p.330.

sūras. All authorities state that the Prophet and his companions used to recite sūras of the Qur'ān in their order in and out of the prayers.<sup>1</sup>

Rashīd Ridā refers to the tradition "The Prophet used to recite the whole Qur'ān to Gabriel and Gabriel to him during Ramadhān once every year, but in the last Ramadhān before the Prophet passed away he recited it twice to Gabriel and Gabriel to him",<sup>2</sup> and argues that the order of these two sūras must have been well known at that time.<sup>3</sup> It is an accepted principle in the science of ḥadīth that "An isolated ḥadīth is not accepted if it contradicts the verdict of reason and the verdict of the Qur'ān..."<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Mālik (179/795) is reported to have said that "The Qur'ān was but compiled according to the revelation, as they (the companions) heard it from the Prophet".<sup>5</sup> al-Qurtubī (671/1272) argues that the arrangement of sūras as a written document is tawqīf, but the readers are allowed to recite differently from the order of the muṣḥaf.<sup>6</sup>

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1. al-Manār, vol.IX, p.585. It might be added that individual sūras are repeatedly referred to by name in the ḥadīth. Thus a cursory inspection of a single chapter of a single source (Sunan Ibn Mājah, vol.II, pp.120-139) reveals no less than twenty six such references.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.485-486.

3. Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.12.

4. al-Khaṭīb, al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah, p.432.

5. Ibn Kathīr, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.25.

6. Qurtubī, al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.53.

Furthermore al-Qurtubī concludes that the order of sūras is like that of verses; all have come to us from the Prophet as they were revealed to him from Allah. If someone were to change the order of any sūrah, it would be like changing the structure of the verses, letters, and words.<sup>1</sup>

al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī (243/857) is reported to have said that the compilation of the Qur'ān is not an invented matter for the Prophet used to command his companions to write it down. But it was written on various materials, (riqā<sup>C</sup>, pieces of cloth), (aktāf, shoulder-blades) and (usub<sup>C</sup>, palm branches stripped of their leaves).

Abū Bakr simply ordered it to be rewritten and to be assembled in one place. Different writings were found in the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) containing the Qur'ān. These were arranged and tied together by a cord in order to ensure that none of it was lost.<sup>2</sup>

al-Suyūṭī devoted a whole book to this subject, called Tanāsuq al-Durar fī Tanāsub al-Suwar<sup>3</sup> in which the subject is treated thoroughly and studied linguistically and rhetorically<sup>4</sup> to prove the succession of the verses and sūras through all the hundred and fourteen sūras of the Qur'ān.

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1. al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> Li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.60.

2. al-Burhān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.238.

3. Published with different title Asrār Tartīb al-Qur'ān, edited by Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad Atā', second edition, Cairo 1398-1978. He also composed a short treatise on this subject entitled Marāṣid al-Maṭāli<sup>C</sup> fī Tanāsub al-Maqāti<sup>C</sup> wa-al-Maṭāli<sup>C</sup>, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, MS.S112, pp.114-117.

4. See for instance, Hiḡāzī, al-Wahdah al-Mawḡū<sup>C</sup> iyya fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, and al-Qāsim, al-I<sup>C</sup> jāz al-Bayānī fī Tartīb Āyāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa-Suwarih.

## The compilation and arrangement of verses in their sūras

The order of verses in the different sūras is agreed to have been ordained by revelation and was not left to the Prophet himself or his companions.<sup>1</sup>

This can be supported by certain pieces of evidence.

Ibn al-Zubayr said to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān: "This verse which is in Sūrat al-Baqarah Those who die and leave wives behind... without turning them out has been abrogated by another verse. Why then do you write it (in the Qur'ān)?" <sup>C</sup>Uthmān said "Leave it (where it is) O son of my brother for I will not shift anything of it (i.e. the Qur'ān) from its original position."<sup>2</sup>

The sūras used to be revealed on specific occasions and the verses came as an answer to a question or inquiry, and Gabriel used to tell the Prophet where to put them.<sup>3</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said "Gabriel came to me and commanded me to put this verse here in this sūrah" (S.XVI, 9) "God commands justice, the doing of good and liberality to kith and kin..."

Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās is reported to have said that the last verse revealed in the Qur'ān is (S.II, 281) "And fear the day when ye shall be brought back to God. Then shall every soul be paid what is earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly". Then Gabriel said to the

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1. Itqān, vol.I, p.172, Muir, The Corān, p.37 says there were indeed recognised sūras or chapters.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.46.

3. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.60.

Prophet, "Put it after verse 280 of al-Baqarah" (S.II).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>C</sup>Umar is reported to have said "I have not asked the Prophet about anything more than I asked him about al-Kalālah<sup>2</sup> to the extent that he pointed his finger to my chest and said to me "Be satisfied with the verse revealed in summer, which is in the end of sūrat al-Nisā'" (S,IV).<sup>3</sup>

A certain person asked the Prophet which verse he would like to bring good to him and his people and was told "The end of sūrat al-Baqarah, for it is one of the treasures of God's mercy from under His Throne which He gave to His people, and there is no good in this world and the next which it does not include".<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet used to teach his companions the Qur'ān, and, if he became busy, he used to ask one of his learned companions to teach the Qur'ān. <sup>C</sup>Uḅādah b. al-Ṣāmit is reported to have said "When the Prophet became busy and someone migrated to him he used to ask one of us to teach him the Qur'ān".<sup>5</sup>

The Prophet also used to send teachers to the far cities and places to teach the Qur'ān. On one occasion, "He sent Mu<sup>C</sup>ādh and Abū Mūsā to Yemen and commanded them to teach the people the Qur'ān".<sup>6</sup>

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1. al-Mabānī, p.41, Qurtubī, vol.I, pp.60-61.

2. i.e. one who dies without leaving a son or a father. See Qurtubī, vol.V. pp.76-78 and vol.VI, pp.28-29.

3. Musnad, vol.I, p.231, Itqān, vol.I, p.173.

4. Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh (English Trans.), vol.II, p.458.

5. Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.9.

6. ibid., p.8.



One of the Followers is reported to have said

"The companions who used to teach them the Qur'ān said that they used to learn the Qur'ān from the Prophet, ten verses, and they used not to learn another unit of ten verses before they understood their meaning and fulfilled their requirements."<sup>1</sup>

However the Qur'ān itself indicates that each sūrah has its own internal arrangement. Thus it challenged the Arabs in the Makkan period: (S.XI, 13) "Or they may say, "He forged it." Say, "Bring ye then ten sūras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than God. If ye speak the truth.""

The challenge of the Qur'ān continued in the Madīnan period

"And if ye are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to our servant, then produce a Sūrah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true," (S.II, 23).

The Prophet also used to recite sūras in the prayers among his companions, which indicates that they have a fixed revealed order (tawqīf). Furthermore, al-Suyūṭī points out, it would have been impossible for the companions to arrange the verses in an order different from the one they used to hear the Prophet use in his recitation, which is a strong argument for tawqīf.<sup>2</sup> al-Suyūṭī

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1. Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.9.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.174.

quotes Ibn Hajar al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī, Makkī b. Abī Tālib al-Qaysī, Ibn al-Bāqillanī, Mālik b. Anas, al-Bayhaqī and Ibn al-Ḥaṣṣār as supporting him on the succession of verses in the different sūras.<sup>1</sup>

#### The problem of missing verses

Zayd b. Thābit is quoted as saying of the compilation of Abū Bakr,

"I started looking for the Qur'ān and collecting it from (what was written on) palm stalks, thin white stones and also from the men who knew it by heart, till I found the last verse of sūrat al-Tawbah (repentance) with Abū Khuzaymah al-Anṣārī and I did not find it with anybody other than him. The verse is "now hath come unto you an Apostle from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish... (till the end of Barā'ah) (S.IX, 128-129)."<sup>2</sup>

It seems that Abū Khuzaymah was the only one who had kept this verse in a written form, for there were many Qur'rā' who had committed the whole Qur'ān to memory.<sup>3</sup> For instance, when Zayd b. Thābit had reached the end of verse 127 of sūrah IX, "...Then they turn aside: God hath turned their hearts (from the light) for they are a people that understood not", Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b informed him that the Prophet had taught him two verses after that and recited the verses (S.IX, 128-129)

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1. Itqān, vol.I, pp.172-176.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.478. The translation of the verses has been taken from Yūsuf <sup>C</sup>Alī.

3. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.16 and Itqān, vol.I, p.101.

"Now hath come unto you an Apostle from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers is he most kind and merciful. But if they turn away, say: "God sufficeth me: there is no god but He, on Him is my trust, - He the lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme.""

Ubayy added that this was the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed.<sup>1</sup>

In another version it is reported that Zayd said:

"A verse from sūrat al-Aḥzāb was missed by me when we copied the Qur'ān and I used to hear Allāh's Apostle peace be upon him reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaymah b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (that verse was) (XXXIII, 23) "Among the believers are men who have been true in their covenant with God." Zayd says: "We then added it to its sūrah in the Mushaf.""<sup>2</sup>

The same theory which was advanced with respect to the missing verses of al-Tawbah can be applied here, with the addition that Zayd himself had committed this verse to memory, as clearly stated by him in this account.

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1. al-Maṣāḥif, p.9, Muqaddimatān, p.35.

2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.11, Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.479-480 and Mishkāt al-Maṣābih, vol.II, p.470, English Translation by James Robson.

It has been argued that this episode of the missing verse of Sūrat al-Ahzāb took place during the second compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless Ibn Kathīr has no hesitation in asserting authoritatively that the missing of the verse 23 of S.XXXIII definitely occurred during the first compilation of Abū Bakr, because it is confirmed by another version of the same tradition which is regarded as authentic.<sup>2</sup>

There is a version narrated by Ibn Abī Dāwūd<sup>3</sup> in which Khuzaymah b. Thābit came with these two verses from the end of Sūrat al-Tawbah, and <sup>C</sup>Umar said that if they had been three verses he would have made them a sūrah. Then he suggested that he should decide on a sūrah and annex them to it. Consequently they were put at the end of S.IX.<sup>4</sup> This version however is said not to be authentic, for it has three problems in its isnād, and the text (matn) contradicts successive and sound reports which state that the Prophet taught his companions the Qur'ān, and the order of verses and sūras. In addition this version states that Abū Khuzaymah put the two verses at the end of Sūrat al-Tawbah, though it is agreed unanimously that he was not one of the scribes who participated in the compilation of the Qur'ān.<sup>5</sup> Indeed Ibn Abī Dāwūd himself narrates in the same book,

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.21.

2. Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.15.

3. c.f. Musnad, vol.III, pp.163-164.

4. al-Maṣāhif, p.30, Ibn Abī Dāwūd in another version related this event to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, see p.31, who suggested to seal with these two verses the last revealed sūrah.

5. al-Bannā, Bulūgh al-Amānī, vol.XVIII, p.173. Ahmad Shākir has also refuted this version on the grounds that it is munkar shādh in contradiction to the Mutawātir. See Musnad, vol.III, pp.163-164.

indeed on the same page, another version which contradicts the above, which states that Ubayy b. Ka<sup>c</sup>b reported that when they compiled the Qur'ān, the scribes thought that verse 127 of S.IX was the end of the sūrah. Then he informed them, "The Prophet taught me two verses after this "verily hath come unto you an Apostle..."<sup>1</sup>

In support of the latter ḥadīth, there is a ḥadīth in al-Musnad on the authority of al-Barā' who is reported to have said "The last sūrah revealed completely to the Prophet is Sūrat Barā'ah (S.IX)".<sup>2</sup> Thus it is a fact that the end of this sūrah was as well known to the companions as the beginning and the body of the sūrah. Nevertheless Ubayy is reported to have said that those two verses were the last revealed verses.<sup>3</sup> It was revealed exactly in the year 9 A.H., and the Prophet sent <sup>c</sup>Alī with this sūrah to recite it and read it in congregation of the Ḥajj at Makkah.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, al-Nasā'ī (303/915) in his Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān reported the ḥadīth narrated by Zayd b. Thābit about the compilation of the Qur'ān during the time of Abū Bakr, and it is notable that he did not mention the missing of two verses of Sūrat al-Tawbah.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ḥazm (456/1063)

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1. S.IX, 128-129, al-Maṣāḥif, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.56, Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.173. The author of Bulūgh al-Amānī, vol.XVIII, pp.54-55 and pp.173-174 accepts this version as a sound ḥadīth accepted to al-Ḥākim.

2. Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.54.

3. ibid., p.174. The report is regarded as sound. See pp.174-175 of Bulūgh al-Amānī.

4. Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, pp.156-158.

5. Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, p.63.

accepts the validity of the ḥadīth of Zayd that he found the two verses with Khuzaymah, but emphasises that this refers only to the written form, as it had been memorised by Zayd himself.<sup>1</sup> According to al-Qurtubī they were substantiated by Khuzaymah alone but with the consensus of the companions.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Bāqillānī on the other hand refutes the validity of this addition to the ḥadīth completely and stated that the Qur'ān was recorded in written form without any exception.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of all the above accounts, the conclusion is that the verses were arranged and put systematically in their order without any single exception.

#### The meaning of the term jam<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān

The word jama<sup>C</sup>a in the phrase "jama<sup>C</sup>a al-Qur'ān" has two meanings. One of these is "to memorise", which occurs in the Qur'ān with this sense in the phrase "Inna <sup>C</sup>alaynā jam<sup>C</sup>ahū wa-qur'ānahū".<sup>4</sup> The expression ḡami<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān and its plural Jumma<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān, are likewise used to mean a man or people who commit the whole book to their memories. Thus <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Amr is reported to have said "jama<sup>C</sup>tu al-Qur'ān fa-qara'tu bi-hi fī kulli laylah..."<sup>5</sup> meaning,

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1. Ibn Ḥazm, al-Iḥkām fī Usūl al-Aḥkām, vol.VI, p.832.

2. Qurtubī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.56.

3. Nukat al-Intisār, p.331.

4. S.LXXV, 17.

5. al-Nasā'ī, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.101.

"I have committed the Qur'ān to memory and recite the (whole) Qur'ān every night..." In this respect Ibn Sīrīn is reported as having said that <sup>C</sup>Uthmān memorised the Qur'ān during the lifetime of the Prophet, i.e. "Jama<sup>C</sup>a <sup>C</sup>Uthmān al-Qur'ān <sup>C</sup>alā <sup>C</sup>ahd Rasūl Allah ṣallā Allāh <sup>C</sup>alayh wa sallam, yaqūlu: ḥafīzahu".<sup>1</sup>

The other meaning of the word jama<sup>C</sup>a is "to collect and write down". We find this in such expressions as "Abū Bakr Awwāl man jama<sup>C</sup>a al-Qur'ān bayn al-lawḥayn",<sup>2</sup> meaning that he compiled the Qur'ān in a written form, as a book (between two boards).

The companions who committed the whole Qur'ān to memory were quite a good number.<sup>3</sup> In the course of our study we have come across more than thirty of them.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the companions who had memorised some parts and sūras of the Qur'ān were in their hundreds or indeed innumerable.<sup>5</sup>

There were many reasons for the companions to memorise the whole Qur'ān during the lifetime of the Prophet, for instance, the excellence of the language of the Qur'ān for the Arabs<sup>6</sup> and the use of

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1. al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashraf, Part IV, vol.I, p.489.

2. Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, p.5.

3. Ma<sup>C</sup>rifat al-Qurrā' al-Kibār, pp.29-39. Itqān, vol.I, pp.201-204.

4. These are those whom we know by name; we have no precise information about anonymous Qurrā', although on one occasion seventy of them are said to have been killed, as early as 5 A.H. See Bukhārī, vol.V. pp.287-288.

5. Itqān, vol.I, p.200.

6. Ibn al-Bāqillānī, I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, pp.33-50.

the Qur'ān for prayers and private and collective recitations.<sup>1</sup>

The Qur'ān was also for them a book of sharī'ah, (law), and social, business and state affairs.

The Prophet urged them to recite the Qur'ān collectively and privately, especially in night prayers during the month of Ramādān, and to memorise some verses, sūras or the whole Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> The person who has memorised the Qur'ān is highly honoured and has a good position in society, and he will be rewarded and given rewards in the hereafter.<sup>3</sup>

In addition the Arab's memory, as Muir puts it, was possessed of a marvellous tenacity.<sup>4</sup> Some companions went to the extreme of completing the recitation of the whole book in one night, but when the Prophet was informed, he asked them not to seal the Qur'ān in less than a week or three days.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand Anas b. Mālīk is reported as having said that only four persons committed the Qur'ān to memory at the time of the Prophet.<sup>6</sup> Although many interpretations of this statement have been offered, the only reasonable one is that he meant amongst his tribe of Khazraj, since he was boasting of their achievements compared to the other branch of the Anṣār, i.e. Aws.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, pp.19-31 and al-Nasā'ī, vol.II, pp.120-139.

2. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, pp.427-499.

3. ibid., pp.427-436.

4. The Corān, p.38.

5. al-Musnad, vol.X, p.43 and al-Nasā'ī, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, pp.101-103.

6. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.488.

7. Nukat al-Intiṣār, pp.70-76, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, pp.46-54.



Thus Jumma<sup>C</sup> al-Qur'ān are those who have memorised the Qur'ān and recite it by heart. The words Huffāz and Qurra' have exactly the same meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Shaban<sup>2</sup> maintains that the Qurra' refer to Ahl al-Qurā (villagers) rather than readers of the Qur'ān. However this hypothesis seems to be groundless since it is clear from the context of all standard references whether late or early that it is readers who are being referred to. Furthermore no lexicographical source gives qurra' as a derivation from the word qaryah; the only accepted form is qarawiyyūn.

However the Prophet used to have scribes who took down the revelation to aid memorisation, and as mentioned above they were quite a good number.<sup>3</sup>

The words ṣaḥīfah and muṣḥaf and their origins

The word ṣaḥīfah, pl. ṣuḥuf and ṣaḥā'if as al-Jawharī states, means a book, as it is found in the Qur'ān (S.LXXXVII, 18-19) "And this is in the book of earliest (Revelations) the book of Abraham and Moses". It means the books revealed to them.<sup>4</sup>

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1. al-Baghawī in his book Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.428, says:

"Kull Shay'in Jama<sup>C</sup> tahu fa-qad qara'tahu".

2. M.A. Shaban, Islamic History: A New Interpretation I, pp.23, 50-51.

3. See pp.32-34 above.

4. Lisān, vol.IX, p.186.

The word muṣḥaf, miṣḥaf or maṣḥaf, means a (book) containing written sheets between two covers. al-Azharī is reported to have said "It is called muṣḥaf, because it was made a container of written sheets between two covers".<sup>1</sup>

There is a ḥadīth which proves that the Prophet used the word muṣḥaf in reference to the written form of the book the Qur'ān. In support of this it is related on the authority of <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Āṣ that a man came to the Prophet and said to him, "This son of mine reads the muṣḥaf in the day time...".<sup>2</sup> Indeed in another version the Prophet is reported as having forbidden travel with a muṣḥaf to the land of the enemy, lest the enemy take it (and destroy or dishonour it).<sup>3</sup>

Thus the word muṣḥaf was not unknown to the Muslims and there is no need to suppose that they borrowed it or invented it after the death of the Prophet. In fact the word was known to the Arabs even before Islam, and we find it in a verse of the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays: Atat ḥijajun ba<sup>C</sup>dī <sup>C</sup>alayhā fa-aṣbahat ka-khaṭṭi  
zabūrin fī maṣāḥif ruhḃān: some years elapsed since my presence, and it became like the writing of psalms in the maṣāḥif of monks.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.IX, p.186.

2. Musnad, vol.X, pp.110-111.

3. Bukhārī, vol.IV, p.146.

4. Dīwān Imru' al-Qays, p.88.

It is maintained that the word muṣḥaf is of Ethiopian origin<sup>1</sup> and that it was brought back by the Muslims who emigrated to Ethiopia, and that Ibn Mas<sup>Ḥ</sup>ūd suggested this name for the compilation of Abū Bakr.<sup>2</sup>

However as seen above the word muṣḥaf whether or not of Ethiopian origin was current in Arabic long before this and indeed it seems strange that Ibn Mas<sup>Ḥ</sup>ūd, who was otherwise not involved in the compilation, should be brought in in this way. In short, this account cannot be accepted. It is maintained also that the word muṣḥaf does not necessarily mean the entire text of the Qur'ān but can also refer to a portion of it.<sup>3</sup>

However it may be pointed out that in the references mentioned above it is clearly the entire text which is referred to. Some personal codices may not have included the entire text but the <sup>Ḥ</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif based upon the first compilation included the entire Qur'ān without any exception as seen above.

### Theory of naskh

The majority of scholars agree on the existence of naskh in the Qur'ān, though they differ on many points, particularly about the meaning and

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1. Concluding Essay: p 46.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.166. al-Suyūṭī states that the Isnād of this report is interpreted (Munqatiḥ<sup>Ḥ</sup>).

3. Martin Hinds, "The Siffin Arbitration Agreement" Journal of Semitic Studies, vol.XVII, pp.95-96.

modes of naskh and their examples.<sup>1</sup>

They all agree<sup>2</sup> on the first mode of it, Naskh al-Hukm wa-Baqā' al-Tilāwah, which is found for instance in sūrah II, verse 240 being said to be abrogated by verse 234 of the same sūrah.<sup>3</sup>

The second mode of naskh discussed is Naskh al-Hukm wa-l-Tilāwah. It is said that some verses and parts of verses were eliminated from the Qur'ān. For example, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Umar is reported to have said that the Prophet taught two men a sūrah and they used to recite it. One night while they were offering prayers they could not remember a single ḥarf and they came next day to the Prophet and told him what happened. The Prophet informed them that this was a part of what had been abrogated, and told them to forget about it.<sup>4</sup>

It is also said that sūrah XXXIII used to be two hundred verses, and that when <sup>C</sup>Uthmān compiled the maṣāḥif he could not find anything but what is present today.<sup>5</sup> In another version it is said that this

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1. al-Juwaynī, al-Burhān fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh, vol.II, pp.1293-1300, al-Ghazzālī al-Mustasfā, vol.I, pp.123-124, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām, vol.I, pp.440-441, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol.I, pp.432-433.

2. Except the Mu<sup>C</sup>tazilī scholars who are reported to have objected the theory of Naskh entirely, see Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol.I, p.435, and al-Juwaynī, al-Burhān fī Uṣūl al-fiqh, vol.II, p.1312.

3. al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām, vol.II, p.263, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol.I, p.435, al-Āmidī, al-Iḥkām, vol.II, p.264.

• 4. Itqān, vol.III, p.74 but the Isnād is weak as is pointed out by al-Ghdmārī, Dhawq al-Halāwah, p.11.

5. Itqān, vol.III, p.72, the Isnād is not authentic, see Dhawq al-Halāwah, p.12.

sūrah was similar to sūrah II.<sup>1</sup> Moreover Ḥudhayfah is reported to have said that what we read of sūrah IX is less than a fourth of the original.<sup>2</sup>

It is related of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Umar that he said,

"Nobody should say that he has committed the whole Qur'ān to memory, for he does not know what is the whole Qur'ān. There is much of the Qur'ān which has been eliminated. He should rather say that he has memorised what is found of it." \*

Finally, al-Thawrī is reported to have said that he came to know that some Qurra' among the companions were killed fighting Musaylimah on the day of Yamāmah, and as a result, some Hurūf of the Qur'ān were lost.<sup>3</sup>

The last mode of naskh brought into the discussion is Mansūkh al-Tilāwah dūn al-Hukm. This means that there are some verses abrogated in recitation, but although they are not recitable, they are still judged to be existent in practise. The examples given are as follows. Some Qurra' were killed at Bir Ma<sup>C</sup>ūnah and there was revealed a part of the Qur'ān which was eliminated. This was "Inform our people that we have met our Lord, He is well pleased with us and has satisfied us".<sup>4</sup> al-Suhaylī points out that this sentence

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1. al-Īdāh, p.46, Itqān, vol.III, p.72.

2. Itqān, vol.III, p.75. \* ibid., p.72.

3. Dhawq al-Halāwah, pp.18-19; al-Ghamārī attributes it to the Muṣannaf of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Razzāq. He adds that this is strongly rejected, and he considers it false and contradictory to the Qur'ān.

4. Itqān, vol.III, p.75.

clearly differs from the style of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> This stylistic fact demonstrates the weakness of this report.<sup>2</sup>

The second example concerns the prohibition of marriage to foster-sisters referred to in the verse "Prohibited to you (for marriage) are ... foster sisters" (S.IV, 23). In discussing the number of times of suckling necessary to establish the foster-relationship, al-Rāzī quotes a ḥadīth attributed to <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah that the number was reduced from ten to five. In this case, ten sucklings is Mansūkh al-Tilāwah wa-al-Hukm and five is Mansūkh al-Tilāwah dūn al-Hukm since there is no reference to either number in the Qur'ān.

This report is narrated by <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah in different versions. In this it is said that the verse of suckling used to be recited during the lifetime of the Prophet and he left it as a part of the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup> Makkī refers to the weakness of this version in that it is contradicted by the Qur'ān and reason.<sup>4</sup> He also regards this example as strange in the matter of abrogation in that the abrogating passage is not recitable, so that the abrogated passage and the verdict of abrogation both stand.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Rawd al-Unuf, vol.VI, pp.206-207.

2. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.81.

3. al-Nawawī, Saḥīḥ Muslim bī Sharḥ al-Nawawī, vol.X, pp.29-30

4. al-Qaysī, al-Idāḥ li-Nāshikh al-Qur'ān wa-Mansūkhīh, p.45.

5. ibid., p.44.

After this he assigns it to the second mode of naskh.  
al-Suyūṭī argues that what was meant by ʿĀ'ishah is that the Prophet was near to his death when it was eliminated, or that some people did not know of the abrogation until after the death of the Prophet.<sup>1</sup>

al-Jassās (370/980) rejects this version for it indicates that the abrogation took place after the death of the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> In addition al-Taḥāwī (321/933) considers the riwāyah to be weak and objects to it strongly.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, al-Naḥḥās points out that Mālik b. Anas, despite narrating this ḥadīth, rejects it and says that a single suckling causes tahrīm, since this is the implication of the Qur'ānic verse already mentioned. al-Naḥḥās (338/949) continues that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Abū Thawr were also not in favour of this ḥadīth, since they consider that three sucklings make tahrīm, and refer to a ḥadīth in this connection.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, al-Naḥḥās states that if this version was authentic ʿĀ'ishah herself would have reported it to the committee of scribes, and then it would have been included in the maṣāḥif.

Also the Qur'ān itself states "We have without doubt sent down the message; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption)" (S.XV, 9).

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1. Itqān, vol.III, p.63.

2. Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, vol.II, p.125.

3. Mushkil al-Āthār, vol.III, p.6.

4. al-Nāsikh wa-al-Mansūkh, p.11.

Hammūdah argues that this report has come to us in many contradicting versions. At one time it appears as Mansūkh al-Tilāwah and at other times not, while in one version the prescriptions of five and ten times are revealed in a single verse while in another version the ten sucklings were revealed first and then the five sucklings were revealed abrogating the ten sucklings.<sup>1</sup> To conclude, the hadīth is not authentic and is groundless.

stoning  
The third example of this mode is what is said to have been a Qur'ānic verse "al-Shaykh wa-al-Shaykhah, when they fornicate, stone them as exemplary punishment from Allāh; and Allāh is Mighty and Wise".<sup>2</sup> The verdict of stoning is agreed to be sunnah, as <sup>C</sup>Umar and <sup>C</sup>Ali were reported to have mentioned that stoning is established by the sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> Bukhārī who narrates the penalty of stoning does not mention this addition of "al-Shaykh wa-al-Shaykhah" and al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī suggests that Bukhārī may have done this intentionally, because only one Rāwī among many has mentioned it, and he could have been mistaken. al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī adds that the great scholars (A'immaḥ and Huffāz) have narrated the hadīth, but they have not mentioned this addition.<sup>4</sup> al-Ṭahāwī discusses it in detail and concludes that the stoning of a married person is established by

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1. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.86.

2. Itqān, vol.III, p.72.

3. Fath al-Bārī, vol.XII, pp.117-120,

4. ibid. vol.XII, p.117.



the sunnah of the Prophet. He supports his view by quoting <sup>C</sup>Alī as having said "I have flogged her according to the book of Allāh, and stoned her according to the sunnah of the Prophet".<sup>1</sup> This example is said to be the best one of Mansūkh al-Tilāwahdūn al-Hukm.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the riwāyah of al-Shaykh wa-al-Shaykha, Marwān b. al-Hakam is reported to have suggested to Zayd b. Thābit that he should include it, but he refused on the grounds that it was contradictory, saying "Don't you see that young married people are stoned if they fornicate?"<sup>3</sup> This would imply that Zayd was left to decide whether to accept or reject material for inclusion in the Qur'ān. Moreover Marwān is not known to have had any role in the compilation of the Qur'ān. al-Ghāmārī states that this version is very detestable, and that Zayd could not have omitted something simply because it contradicted the stoning of young married people.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover <sup>C</sup>Umar is reported to have said that when it was revealed he came to the Prophet and asked him permission to write it, but he felt that the Prophet was unwilling for it to be written. Then <sup>C</sup>Umar said to Zayd b. Thābit "Don't you see that if the shaykh fornicates and is unmarried, he is flogged and that if the young man fornicates and is married, he is stoned?"<sup>5</sup> However it was very

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1. Mushkil al-Āthār, vol.III, p.2.

2. al-Qirā'āt wa-l-Lahajāt, pp.84-85.

3. Fath al-Bārī, vol.XII, p.143.

4. Dhawq al-Halāwah, p.17.

5. Itqān, vol.III, p.76. Shaykh in this context means an old man.

unusual for the Prophet to be unwilling for a verse revealed to him to be written down, and it is hard to understand how <sup>C</sup>Umar could object to an Āyah which he believe to be revealed from Allāh.<sup>1</sup> al-Ghamārī states that Allāh would have not omitted an Āyah from the Qur'ān just because some people objected to it. He adds that all these contradictions support the view that what some call the Āyat al-Rajm is not an Āyah at all. It is at most a hadīth.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth example of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah dūn al-Hukm is the following. If the son of Adam were to ask for a wādī of wealth and be given it, he would ask for a second one, and if he were to ask for a second and be given it, he would ask for a third, and nothing would fill the maw of the son of Adam except the dust. And Allāh accepts the repentance of the one who repents. Verily the faithful religion in the sight of Allāh is the straight path (al-Hanīfiyyah), which is not polytheism, not Judaism, and not Christianity. And he who does good deeds will not be rejected.<sup>3</sup>

al-Suhaylī (581/1185) states that this alleged Qurānic verse would in any case be khābar not hukm (i.e. narrative as opposed to commands, prohibitions, etc.) and therefore not subject to the rules of abrogation.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dhawq al-Halāwah, pp.17-18.

2. ibid., p.18.

3. al-Hākim, vol.II, p.224, Itqān, vol.III, p.73. Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b is reported to have said that the Prophet read sūrah XCVIII to him and in it was this addition.

4. al-Rawd al-Unuf, vol.II, p.176.

The authentic riwāyah of this ḥadīth mentions only that the Prophet read sūrah XCVIII to Ubayy without mentioning the addition.<sup>1</sup> In another version Ibn ʿAbbās is reported to have said that he did not know if this (addition) was from the Qur'ān or not.<sup>2</sup> However Ubayy himself is reported to have said also that they used to think that it was from the Qur'ān until Ṣūrat al-Takāthur (S.XCIV) was revealed.<sup>3</sup>

al-Alūsī considers that the addition attributed to Ubayy was not authentic.<sup>4</sup> However, Ḥammūdah maintains that, stylistically in his view, it is a ḥadīth because the words yahūdiyyah, naṣrānīyyah and ḥanīfiyyah are not found in the Qur'ān, while the wording is similar to the utterances of ḥadīth.<sup>5</sup>

Fifth, Abū Mūsā is reported to have said that they used to read a sūrah, which they thought was similar to one of al-Musabbiḥāt,<sup>6</sup> which they forgot, but that they remembered from it: "O ye who believe, do not say that which ye do not; it will be certified on your necks and you will be questioned about it on the day of judgement".<sup>7</sup>

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.256-257.

2. Fath al-Barī, vol.XI, p.213.

3. ibid., Miskāt al-Maṣābīḥ, vol.II, p.671.

4. Rūḥ al-Maʿānī, vol.XXX, p.208.

5. al-Qirāʾāt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.80.

6. al-Musabbiḥāt are those sūras which begin with tasbīḥ (glorifying) (i.e. S.LXI and S.LXII).

7. Itqān, vol.III, p.74, Burhān, vol.II, p.37.

Sixth, <sup>C</sup>Umar is reported to have said that they used to recite "Do not reject your fathers, for this will be (accounted) disbelief against you". Then he said to Zayd, "was it so". He replied "yes!".<sup>1</sup>

Seventh, <sup>C</sup>Umar is also reported to have asked <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān b. <sup>C</sup>Awf if he did not find in what was revealed, "Fight as you have been fighting at first" for it was not found now. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān replied that it was from the part eliminated from the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Eighth, Maslamah b. Khālīd al-Anṣārī is reported to have said that there were two verses from the Qur'ān which were not recorded, which were "Those who believed and suffered exile and fought in the path of Allāh, with their wealth and persons, rejoice, for you are successful and those who gave them asylum and aided and defended them against the people with whom Allāh is angry. No person knows what delights of the eyes are kept hidden for them - as a reward for their (good) deeds".<sup>3</sup> It is obvious that these two verses are borrowed with little change from S.VIII, 74 and S.XXXII, 17 and joined together,

Ninth, <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah is reported to have recited S.XXXIII, 56 "God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet..." with the addition

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1. Itqān, vol.III, p.74. The riwāyah is not authentic because there is a break in the transmission, see Dhawq al-Ḥalāwah, p.13.

2. Itqān, vol.III, p.74.

3. ibid.

"And those who pray in the first line". This addition is reported to have been a ḥadīth<sup>1</sup> which indicates that the report of <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah is no more than sunnah.

Finally, it is said that the sūras which are sometimes combined into one sūrah known as al-Qunūt and sometimes known separately as sūrat al-Khal<sup>C</sup> and sūrat al-Hafad, were eliminated from the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

However, Ibn al-Bāqillānī objects to this theory of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah. He quotes a group of scholars who object to this kind of abrogation, because the reports are isolated, and it is impossible to judge the revelation of the Qur'ān and its abrogation by isolated reports, which are not sufficient evidence.<sup>3</sup> A contemporary researcher has studied the theory of al-Naskh, and concludes that all these reports are fabricated, although he agrees in general to the Mansūkh al-Tilāwah wa-al-Hukm, since the elimination took place during the period of revelation and the lifetime of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Itqān, vol.III, p.73. The ḥadīth is not authentic as its Isnād includes two unknown rāwīs, Dhawq al-Halāwah, p.14.
  2. Itqān, vol.III, p.75. al-Ghāmārī states that what is called sūrat al-Hafad was composed by <sup>C</sup>Umar. Dhawq al-Halāwah, p.19.
  3. Nukat al-Intisār, pp.103-104 and Itqān, vol.III, p.75.
  4. Muṣṭafā Zayd, al-Naskh Fī-al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Vol.I, p.282-3. Supporting his view, he quotes al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.II, p.480, who states that it is not impossible by any means that Allāh should make his Prophet forget some (verses) revealed to him. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭīb in his book Min Qadāyā al-Qur'ān, pp.235-236, makes the suggestion that in the final revealed version some verses were transferred to other sūras rather than being eliminated, but does not quote any references to support his view.

However it must be pointed out that there are many reasons for objecting to both kinds of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah either with or without the Hukm:

1. All examples given are either not authentic, or contradict each other, or are isolated reports, in many different versions.
2. They are not similar to the style of the Qur'ān as for instance can be seen from a comparison between the end of (S.II) and (S.III) and the Du<sup>ḥ</sup>ā' al-Qunūt.
3. It is an agreed rule among all uṣūlīs that the Qur'ān is substantiated only by successive reports, and these examples are not successive, and therefore are anomalous reports.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is general agreement among both the Shi<sup>c</sup>ites and the Ahl al-Sunnah about the existence of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah,<sup>2</sup> some Shi<sup>c</sup>ite scholars claim that the sunnī scholars' acceptance of the theory of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah prove that the Qur'ān has been corrupted.<sup>3</sup> Western scholars have adopted various opinions on the subject. Nöldeke accepts the traditional accounts of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah,<sup>4</sup> while Burton rejects the entire concept as a fabrication.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Itqān, vol.III, p.75, Burhān, vol.II, p.36, al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.77, Mabāhith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, p.266, Dhawq al-Halāwah, pp.19-20.
  2. al-Tūsī, al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.13.
  3. al-Khū'ī, al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, p.201, Tafsīr al-Qummi, vol.I, Introduction of the Editor, Ṭayyib al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī, pp.22-25.
  4. Nöldeke, Geschichte Des Qorāns, vol.I, pp.234-261.
  5. Burton, The Collection of the Qur'ān, p.238.

Wansbrough on the other hand in line with his general approach regards the whole problem as a projection back in time of the disputes of a later period.<sup>1</sup>

### The Shi<sup>C</sup>ite opinions on the alteration of the Qur'ān

There are many riwāyas in Shi<sup>C</sup>ite sources which claim that the Qur'ān has been altered by the omission of certain parts, which they claim has been done intentionally, since they concerned the position of the Ahl al-Bayt.<sup>2</sup>

Here are some examples: Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh is reported to have said that the Qur'ān as revealed by Gabriel to Muḥammad consisted of seventeen thousand verses.<sup>3</sup>

He is also reported to have said that sūrah XCVIII includes the names of seventy men of Quraysh and the names of their fathers.<sup>4</sup>

Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh again is reported to have directed one of his followers to read the Qur'ān as it is now, saying that when the Qā'im came he should read the original Qur'ān in its complete form.<sup>5</sup>

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (S.XXXIII) is said to have been equal in length to Sūrat al-An<sup>C</sup>ām (S.VI), and that the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt had been omitted.<sup>6</sup> Moreover Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh is reported to have said that the Āyah Ummatun hiya arbā min ummah has been corrupted, and that it should be corrected to be read as A'immatun hiya azkā min a'immatikum.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Wansbrough, Quranic Studies, p.197.

2. al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi, vol.II, pp.631-634, Uṣūl al-Kāfi, edited by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Husayn b. al-Muẓaffar, vol.II, Part V, pp.178-204.

3. al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi, vol.II, p.634.

4. ibid.

5. ibid., p.633.

6. Rūḥ al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī, vol.I, p.24.

7. ibid.

Certain Shi<sup>C</sup>ite scholars also claim that the meaning of certain verses has been deliberately distorted, an example of which is the (S.XLIII, 4) verse "And verily, It is in the Mother of the Books, In Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom". The word aliyy which means high (in dignity) as appears in the context, is taken by them to refer to <sup>C</sup>Alī b. Abī Tālib.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, al-Qummī states that there has been alteration of the Qur'ān by putting one harf in the place of another and that it contains that which is not in accordance with the revelation.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is said that the muṣḥaf of Fāṭimah was three times the size of the existing muṣḥaf, and that it did not contain a single harf of the latter.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore it is said that no one has the whole Qur'ān except the A'imma.<sup>4</sup> In addition it is claimed that there are two sūras missing from the muṣḥaf concerning the rank of the Ahl al-Bayt called Sūrat al-Walāyah and Sūrat al-Nūrayn.<sup>5</sup> They consist of some Quranic verses brought from different sūras with some little addition and alteration. Among the Shi<sup>C</sup>ites themselves it is said that these reports were fabricated and

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1. Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol.I, pp.28-29.
  2. ibid., p.5. The editor, al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī agrees with the author, and gives as an example the alleged omission of Fī <sup>C</sup>Aliyy after "O Apostle! Proclaim The (message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord" (S.V, 70), Yūsuf Alī's Translation, p.264.
  3. Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol.II, Part V, pp.199-204.
  4. ibid., pp.178-181.
  5. Nöldeke, Geschichte des Qorans, vol.II, pp.102-103.  
Mukhtaṣar al-Tuhfa al-Ithnay <sup>C</sup>Ashriyya, Introduction of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, p.31.



no original source is given for them in Shi<sup>C</sup>ite reference works.<sup>1</sup> Stylistically, there are many errors which are proof of their lack of authenticity.<sup>2</sup> Moreover <sup>C</sup>Alī came after <sup>C</sup>Uthmān and ruled for several years and was succeeded by his son al-Ḥasan who ruled for several months. They would have been able to correct any errors or to put everything in its proper order if there had been any alteration. Furthermore <sup>C</sup>Alī is reported to have agreed with <sup>C</sup>Uthmān and supported him in the matter of compilation and defended him against the rebels.<sup>3</sup> Among the Shi<sup>C</sup>ites also the majority deny and reject entirely the theory of alteration on the grounds of the non-authenticity of the reports and their fabrication,<sup>4</sup> the stylistic differences and linguistic errors,<sup>5</sup> and the fact that the title, given as al-Nūrayn, referring to the Prophet and <sup>C</sup>Alī is known historically to have been invented later in the seventh century of the hijrah.<sup>6</sup> There are some reports which are said to be authentic, though they indicate that there is alteration in the muṣḥaf, but they are interpreted as referring to additional interpretation added to the text as Tafsīr only and not by any means

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1. Tafsīr Ālā' al-Rahmān, The author's introduction, pp.16-17.

2. ibid.

3. al-Kāmil, vol.III, p.112.

4. al-Tūsī, al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.3, Tafsīr 'Ālā' al-Rahmān, pp.17-18, al-Ṭabarsī, Majma<sup>C</sup> al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.15 and Nukat al-Intisār, p.365.

5. Tafsīr Ālā' al-Rahmān, pp.16-17, Darāz, Madkhal, p.40.

6. Darāz, Madkhal, p.40.

a part of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the maṣāḥif which exist today among all Muslims are the same. The maṣāḥif printed in Egypt were accepted and copied in Iran and other places, without any alterations, additions or omissions.

They agree in the recitation and orthography, though they may differ concerning the meanings and Tafsīr.

Before concluding this chapter it may be appropriate to mention briefly two supposed episodes which have sometimes been used to cast doubt upon the trustworthiness of the text of the Qur'ān.

The first of these is the story of the gharānīq. This problem has been discussed by many writers.<sup>2</sup> In essence, the Prophet is reported as having recited in Makkah (S.LIII), and when he came to its end he made the sajdah of Tilāwah and in this he was followed by those who were present at the time, among whom were some non-Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Tafsīr Ālā' al-Rahmān, pp.18-19.

2. See for example al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol.XXIII, pp.49-56, <sup>C</sup>Iyad, al-Shifā', vol.II, pp.282-305, Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, vol.III, pp.229-81, al-Qāsimī, Tafsīr, vol.XII, pp.36-57, Sayyid Qutb, Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān, vol.IV, pp.2431-36, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭīb, al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī, vol.III, pp.1061-85, al-Albānī, Nasb al-Majānīq Li-Nasf Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq, and A.M. Ahsan, "The 'satanic' verses and the orientalism" Hamdard Islamicus, vol.V, Number I, Spring 1982, pp.27-36. See also Bell and Watt, Introduction to the Qur'ān, pp.88-89, Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, pp.101-109, Lichtenstaedter, "A note on the Gharānīq and related Qur'ānic problems" Israel Oriental Studies, 5 (1975), pp.54-61 and Burton, "Those are the high-flying cranes" JSSXV (1970), pp.246-265.

3. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.363, and Tirmidhī, vol.III, p.58.

A certain number of the earlier Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia are reported to have subsequently returned to Makkah having heard that the people of Makkah had embraced Islam after following the Prophet in his Sujūd al-Tilāwah.<sup>1</sup> So far the reports are accepted, but some narrators annex to this report the story of al-gharānīq in which it is said that when the Prophet recited (S.LIII, 19-20) he added in the text of the Qur'ān the words "Tilka al-gharānīq al-<sup>C</sup>ulā wa-inna shafā<sup>C</sup>atahunna la-Turtajā".<sup>2</sup> "These are the exalted Gharānīq whose intercession is to be hoped for", and that Gabriel came with a revelation to abrogate it immediately. Moreover certain Mufasssīrūn quote the story as an example of Satan interfering in the process of revelation.

The story however is no more than a fiction, being found no earlier than the time of the followers, and not being attributed in any of its versions to any one of the companions, let alone to the Prophet,<sup>3</sup> and hence al-Rāzī asserts that the story is invented by enemies of Islam.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of this story in many books of Tafsīr is no different from the presence there of what is introduced under the name

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1. Sīrat Ibn Hishām, vol.III, pp.330-333.

2. Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVII, pp.186-190, third ed. 1388-1968 (unedited version).

3. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, vol.III, pp.229-231 and al-Shifā', vol.II, p.289.

4. Mafātīh al-Ghayb, vol.XXIII, p.51.

of Isrā'īliyyāt. al-Qāḍi <sup>C</sup>Iyād objects to it and refutes it on two grounds, the first being that it is groundless, obscure, contradictory and is not attributed to anyone among the companions. Secondly the context contradicts the infallibility of the Prophet for it is impossible that he would wish to praise false gods, intentionally or otherwise, because the Prophet is reported as saying "verily my eyes sleep but my heart does not", or for Satan to have any effect on him. He continues that these words differ in style and seem alien to the Qur'ān, and that there is no report from the enemies of Islam of different origins that any of them used the story against the Qur'ān and that no-one among the newly-converted Muslims reverted from Islam as a result of this story as happened on the occasion of the Isrā'. In addition Quraysh and Thaḳīf had offered the Prophet that if he pleased their idols only by looking on them with favour they would embrace Islām and the Prophet had refused their proposal which indicates the falsehood of the story of the gharānīq.<sup>1</sup>

According to him if the story were authentic the best interpretation for al-gharānīq would have been the angels since their intercession could be hoped for, but when the polytheists attributed the word gharānīq to their idols it was abrogated.<sup>2</sup> al-Rāzī in his refutation of the story points out that it is rejected by the Qur'ān, sunnah and reason. Firstly he quotes the following verses of the Qur'ān:

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1. al-Shifā', vol. II, pp. 289-297.

2. ibid., p. 302.

a.

"And if the apostle were to invent Any sayings in  
Our name, We should certainly seize him by his  
right hand. Nor could any of you withhold him  
(From Our wrath)." (S.LXIX, 44-46)

b.

"...It is not for me Of my own accord, To change it:  
I follow Naught but what is revealed Unto me: if  
I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the  
Penalty of a Great Day to come." (S.X, 15)

c.

"Nor does he says (aught) Of (his own) Desire.  
It is no less than Inscription sent down to him." (S.LIII, 3-4)

d.

"And their purpose was to tempt thee away From that  
which We Had revealed unto thee to substitute in Our  
name something quite different: (In the case), behold!  
They would certainly have made thee (their friend)! And  
had We not Given you thee strength thou wouldst nearly  
Have inclined to them a little." (S.XVII, 73-74)

e.

"...Thus (is it revealed), that We May strengthen thy  
heart thereby, and We have Rehearsed it to thee in  
slow well-arranged stages gradually." (S.XXV, 32)

f.

"By degrees shall We teach thee to declare (The Message),  
so thou shalt not forget." (S.LXXXVII, 6)

Secondly he reports Ibn Khuzaymah (311/923) as having said that it was fabricated by Zanādiqah and composed a book of this subject, and reports al-Bayhaqī as having stated "this story is groundless in its transmission and the narrators of it are rejected". He also refers to al-Bukhārī who does not mention the story.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Mafātīh al-Ghayb, vol.XXIII, p.51.

Thirdly al-Rāzī argues that to praise idols is kufr which cannot be attributed to the Prophet and that he was not able to pray in the Ka<sup>c</sup>bah until after the polytheists had left it, since their hatred for him was too great. He adds that we would have thought that God would have prevented Satan from causing mischief in the beginning rather than allowing him to do so and then correcting it, thus allowing the possibility of confusion. He concludes that it is impossible that the Prophet could add or omit anything to the revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore what is meant by the word "Yansakhu" in S.XXII, 53 is its linguistic meaning (i.e. Izālah) rather than the term used in al-Nāsikh wa-al-Mansūkh.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore the word Tamannā in this context means only hope<sup>3</sup> although it may have in Arabic another meaning, i.e. to recite.<sup>4</sup> In fact Ibn Hishām mentions nothing more than the fact that the Muhājirūn came back to Makkah.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Kathīr objects to the story of the gharānīq and confirms that it is not accepted, and although it has been narrated in many different weak versions it is rejected because the weak is not acceptable no matter how often it is reported.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Mafātīh al-Ghayb, vol.XXIII, p.51.

2. ibid., pp.52 and 56.

3. al-Rāzī, Mafātīh al-Ghayb, vol.XXIII, p.51, Tafsīr al-Qāsimī, vol.XII, pp.46-47.

4. ibid.

5. Sīrat Ibn Hishām, vol.III, pp.330-333. However Muḥammad b. Ishāq is reported as having narrated this episode with the addition of al-Gharānīq, see Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVII, p.187 (unedited version).

6. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, vol.III, pp.229-231.

Muhammad <sup>C</sup>Abduh points out that this word ghurnūq or ghirnīq (pl. gharānīq) is not found in any sound report as having been used by the pre-Islamic Arabs in their poems or speeches as a name for their idols. In addition he studies the meanings of the word lexicographically to conclude that none of them seems to be relevant to the idols.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the second episode, it is maintained that certain scribes of the Prophet used to deceive him and make alterations in the text of the Qur'ān, changing the ending of the verses, and that Prophet saw little point in objecting to this and that he accepted them on the grounds that it makes no difference whether it is written samī<sup>C</sup>un <sup>C</sup>Alīm or Alīmun samī<sup>C</sup>.<sup>2</sup> The story is attributed to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Abī al-Sarḥ who is reported as a result to have reverted from Islam and gone back to Makkah and claimed that he used to write what he wanted. In another version it is said that when the Prophet recited S.XXIII, 12-14 and asked him to write it down he commented "Fatabāraka allāhu āhsanu al-khāliqīn". The Prophet then said "so it has been revealed" whereupon he reverted and said that it had been revealed to him as much as to the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> On the conquest of Makkah he was ordered to be killed. However this report is groundless since it is not mentioned in the earlier reliable sources. For example there is no mention of this in the books of Maghāzī and Sīrah of Ibn Hishām. The first reference mentioning this is on the authority

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1. Tafsīr al-Qāsimī, vol.XII, p.56.

2. al-Shifā', vol.II, p.306; al-Qaḍī <sup>C</sup>Iyād comments that the report is no more than a narration attributed to a non-believer whose report is most likely to be rejected.

3. Qurtubī, vol.VII, p.40.

of Ibn al-Kalbī (146/763) and al-Wāqidī (207/822).<sup>1</sup> However both men are accused of being liars and on the other hand they are Shi<sup>C</sup>ite which may indicate that they forged the story against Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ who was related to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.<sup>2</sup>

The same thing is attributed to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Abī Khaṭal<sup>3</sup> and to an ex-Christian who is also said to have made alterations and reverted to Christianity, and that his grave cast him up many times.<sup>4</sup>

The story however is groundless and it is no more than fiction. For it seems difficult to believe that the Qur'ān which used to be memorised by the Prophet himself and many too of his companions, certain of whom used to have their own personal codices, should have been altered or undergone any change either against the will of the Prophet or by his consent. The Prophet is reported as having corrected al-Barā' b. <sup>C</sup>Āzib when he changed a single word when he read from his memory what he had been taught to say when going to sleep and thus it is impossible that he would have permitted any change in the text of the Qur'ān.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore the ending verses (al-Fawāṣil) play an important role in the beauty of the style of the Qur'ān.

In no single case do the scribes differ in writing any Fāṣilah while they have been reported as having differed in writing the word al-tabūt, to write it with final tā' or hā'.

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1. al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, vol.II, p.855.

2. al-A<sup>C</sup>zamī, Kuttāb al-Nabiyy, p.89.

3. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, Uyūn al-Athar, vol.II, pp.175-176 and 315-316.

4. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, p.3.

5. Bukhārī, vol.VIII, pp.216-17.



In fact the reliable sources mention about <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Abī al-Sarḥ that he was a Muslim and one of the scribes of the revelation and he reverted and fled from Madīnah to his people in Makkah. As a result when the Prophet conquered Makkah he ordered that Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ should be killed, but <sup>C</sup>Uthmān interceded with the Prophet to accept his repentance and this was accepted. Even if he claimed after leaving Islam that he used to make alterations in the Qur'ān, this allegation should not be accepted any more than in the case of al-Raḥḥāl b. <sup>C</sup>Unfuwah, who was sent on a mission to Banū Hanīfah, the people of Musaylimah, but joined Musaylimah and told the people that he came with a message that the Prophet agreed to share with Musaylimah and was followed by some people.<sup>1</sup> Thus we cannot accept these allegations.

It seems also very difficult to believe that the Prophet was deceived three times respectively given that he said "the believer is not stung twice from a single hole".<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we can say that the Qur'ān was committed to the hearts of the companions and was safely guarded in the records kept during the life of the Prophet who used to have special scribes for the revelation of the Qur'ān.

Abū Bakr compiled these records in a complete muṣḥaf and put them in their orders of verses and chapter as found in writing and supported by the memories of Huffāz and this muṣḥaf was kept in his custody and passed to <sup>C</sup>Umar who left it in the custody of his

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1. Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol.III, p.289.

2. Sunan Ibn Mājah, vol.II, p.1318 hadīth no. 3982-83.

daughter because he died before the installation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān. When differences arose between the Qur'rā' <sup>C</sup>Uthmān took a decision with consent of the companions to make copies from the master copy of Abū Bakr and distributed them to the Amsār with a Qāri' to teach the people accordingly. The Qur'ān was received and transmitted with tawātur generation after generation. Hence our muṣḥaf is a complete record of the Qur'ān without alteration, addition or omission. Obscured, weak or fabricated reports cannot be accepted in the matter of the Qur'ān which needs tawātur for every piece of information concerning its text. Although the abrogation of certain verses during the lifetime of the Prophet does not affect the trustworthiness of the Qur'ān, all claimed examples of Mansūkh al-Tilāwah with or without Hukm studied are shown to be groundless, as are also the two episodes of the gharānīq and the scribes who are said to have altered the fawāṣil of the Qur'ān.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ʿUTHMĀNIC MAṢĀHIF

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ʿUTHMĀNIC MAṢĀḤIF

#### The maṣāḥif and their relation to the aḥruf

Did the maṣāḥif compiled by ʿUthmān include the seven aḥruf discussed in the first chapter? Views on this differ according to the various views on the nature of the seven aḥruf.

Ibn al-Jazarī attributes to a group of scholars the view that the maṣāḥif contain the seven aḥruf. They argue that the ummah cannot abandon anything of the aḥruf and that the maṣāḥif were copied from the compilation of Abū Bakr.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ḥazm supports this view, stating that ʿUthmān did not change anything in the Qur'ān and could not rescind the permission to recite the Qur'ān in seven aḥruf given to the Muslims to facilitate its reading. He adds that the aim of ʿUthmān was to unify Muslims and to provide them with maṣāḥif to correct the mistakes of some qurrā' and their personal codices, and to make his maṣāḥif a reference for all Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Bāqillānī is reported to have supported this view, stating that what ʿUthmān had done was to stop people from reciting the Qur'ān in certain unauthentic ways and interpolating explanatory material.

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.31.

2. al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal, vol.II, p.77.

He adds that neither <sup>C</sup>Uthmān nor any other Muslim leader could make difficult for the Ummah what had previously been made easy for them. Moreover, he says that the people did not differ about famous and authentic ahruf but only about isolated readings.<sup>1</sup>

Another group of scholars state that <sup>C</sup>Uthmān compiled the maṣāḥif in only one ḥarf, abandoning the rest of the ahruf.<sup>2</sup> al-Ṭabarī argues for this, stating that it was not an obligation on Muslims to recite the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, but only a permission (rukḥṣa), and that when <sup>C</sup>Uthmān witnessed the disputes among the Muslims over the qirā'ah he decided with the consent of the Ummah to unify them in one ḥarf.<sup>3</sup> al-Ṭahāwī supports this view and states that the permission for seven ahruf was due to necessity, as it was found difficult for Muslims to change their habits bearing in mind their illiteracy. He adds when their dialect became close to that of the Prophet and when the people who could write increased they were commanded by <sup>C</sup>Uthmān to read the Qur'ān in only one ḥarf.<sup>4</sup> al-Qurtubī attributes this view to Sufyān b. <sup>C</sup>Uyaynah, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Wahb, al-Ṭabarī, al-Ṭahāwī, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr, and most of the scholars.<sup>5</sup>

Finally it is said, this view being attributed to the vast majority of scholars, that the maṣāḥif contain as much as possible of

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1. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.142 and al-Ja<sup>C</sup>burī adopts this view and regards it the authentic one. See his Kanz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī, f4.

2. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr vol.I, pp.63-64, Mushkil al-Āthār, vol.IV, pp.190-191.

3. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr vol.I, pp.58-59.

4. Mushkil al-Āthār, vol.IV, pp.190-191.

5. Qurtubī, vol.I, pp.42-43.

the ahruf as can be accommodated within the orthography of the Qur'ān, according to the final revealed version.<sup>1</sup> Consequently the maṣāḥif include an undefined number of ahruf, certainly more than one harf but not all seven ahruf.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī opts for this view, using the argument of al-Ṭabarī.<sup>3</sup> Al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī supports this view stating that the maṣāḥif contain an unspecified number of the seven ahruf. He gives an example from the maṣāḥif, in which the word 'min' in (S.IX, 100), exists in the muṣḥaf of Makkah while it is omitted in the maṣāḥif of the other cities.<sup>4</sup> Abū Shāmah quotes al-Mahdawī as having supported this view, and considers it the sounder one, attributing it to the eminent scholars.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed this last view seems to be the most likely and acceptable since indications of more than one harf exist in the maṣāḥif, as has been pointed out by al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī.<sup>6</sup>

Those who agree that the maṣāḥif include only one harf or certain unspecified number of ahruf differ among themselves as regards their abrogation whether this took place during the lifetime of the Prophet, this view being attributed to the vast majority of scholars or whether it was later at the time of the compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān on the grounds that it was not an obligation on Muslims to preserve all seven ahruf,

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.31, Itqān, vol.I, pp.141-142.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.31-32.

3. ibid.

4. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.30.

5. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, pp.140-142.

6. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.30.

but rather a rukhsah (permission) and that when <sup>C</sup>Uthmān witnessed the dispute among the Muslims concerning qirā'āt he removed this permission.<sup>1</sup>

However the existence of all seven ahruf or some unspecified amount of them in the qirā'āt does not necessarily mean that they were written down in the maṣāḥif. Makkī b. Abī Tālib al-Qaysī states that "the Qur'ān was written in one harf to minimise the difference (in readings) among Muslims".<sup>2</sup> This is supported by al-Baghawī who states that this was according to the final revealed version.<sup>3</sup>

#### Orthography of the maṣāḥif

The maṣāḥif contained neither vowels nor diacritic points the Arabic orthography resembling in this, the scripts from which it was derived.

Some scholars have maintained that this lack of vocalisation and diacritics was intentional, so that either all seven ahruf or some portion of them could be accommodated.

Among the scholars who opted for this view are al-Dānī,<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī,<sup>5</sup> Ibn Taymiyya<sup>6</sup> and Ibn al-Jazarī.<sup>7</sup> This view would make it necessary to assume that vocalisation and diacritics were known to the Arabs when they wrote the maṣāḥif. Indeed many authorities maintain that the Arabic letters had always possessed

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1. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, pp.525-526, Sharḥ al-Zurqanī, vol.II, pp.11-12 and al-Muṭī<sup>C</sup>ī, al-Kalimāt al-Ḥisān, pp.113-114.

2. al-Ibānah, p.33 and Munjid, p.56.

3. Sharḥ al-Sunnah, vol.IV, p.525.

4. al-Muḥkam fī Naqt al-Maṣāḥif, p.3.

5. al-<sup>C</sup>Awāsim min al-Qawāsim, vol.II, p.481.

6. Fatāwā, vol.XII, pp.100-102.

7. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.32.

those features or at least i<sup>C</sup>jām (dotting).<sup>1</sup> In support of this, we might adduce certain documents which date to the early first century A.H. The first one dates from the reign of <sup>C</sup>Umar in (22/643) and in it there appear some letters with dotting, i.e. khā', dhāl, zāy, shīn and nūn.<sup>2</sup> The other is that of al-Ṭā'if which dates from the reign of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiyah in (58/677), in it most letters which require to be dotted are dotted.<sup>3</sup>

The maṣāḥif remained free from any change until it was felt necessary to develop their orthography by means of the introduction of vocalisation to help the readers of the Qur'ān to read it perfectly and avoid errors in the i<sup>C</sup>rāb which had been brought about by non-Arabs who had embraced Islām.<sup>4</sup>

During the reign of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiyah, Ziyād, Governor of Basrah, is reported to have appointed Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī to introduce final vocalisation. He was accordingly the first scholar to introduce vocalisation (Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb) into the orthography of the maṣāḥif.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ṣubḥ al-A<sup>C</sup>shā, vol.III, p.151, Miftāḥ al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah, vol.II, p.89, Kashf al-Zunūn, vol.I, p.712, al-Dānī in his book al-Muḥkam, p.35 mentions the Pre-Islamic Aslam b. Khudrah as a pioneer of vocalisation and diacritics.
2. Grohmann, From the World of Arabic papyri, Cairo 1952, pp.82 and 113-114. al-Munajjid, Tārīkh al-Khaṭṭ al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, pp.37-39, 116, 126 and al-Jabbūrī, Asl al-Khaṭṭ al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī wa-Tatawwuruhū, p.107.
3. Early Islamic Inscriptions Near Taif in the Hijaz, JNES, VII (1948) pp.236-242 and al-Munjjid, Tārīkh al-Khaṭṭ al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, pp.101-103.
4. al-Muḥkam fī Naqt al-Maṣāḥif, pp.3-4 and 18-19.
5. al-Muḥkam fī Naqt al-Maṣāḥif, pp.3-4, al-Aghānī, vol.X II, p.298, Itqān, vol.IV, p.160, al-Awā'il, vol.II, pp.129-130 and al-Anbārī, Nuzhat al-Alibbā', pp.8-11. He adds that the authentic view is that Abū al-Aswad was appointed by <sup>C</sup>Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.



Some other riwāyas state that Yaḥyā b. Ya<sup>C</sup>mur or Naṣr b. <sup>C</sup>Āṣim was the first to introduce Naqt.<sup>1</sup>

However, al-Qalqashandī states that most of scholars agree that Abū al-Aswad introduced vocalisation,<sup>2</sup> although Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb of Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī consisted merely of the indication of final vowels (i<sup>C</sup>rāb) and tanwīn.<sup>3</sup>

The next step in the development of the maṣāḥif was the introduction of diacritic points (Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>jām). This took place during the reign of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān who is said to have commanded al-Ḥajjāj (d. 95 A.H.) Governor of Iraq to appoint certain scholars to distinguish the letters. As a result Naṣr b. <sup>C</sup>Āṣim is said to have been appointed to carry out the task. He then was the first to introduce Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>jām for the same reason as for the first step, Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb, which was to facilitate the reading of the maṣāḥif.<sup>4</sup> Vocalisation and diacritics were the same, consisting of dots which were distinguished by colour, red for Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb and black for Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>jām.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Muḥkam, pp.5-6, al-Dānī states that Yaḥyā and Naṣr were probably the first who introduced Naqt to the people, and they had been taught by Abū al-Aswad who started Naqt. Qurṭubī, vol.I, p.63. He adds the name of al-Ḥasan to that of Yaḥyā. (Itqān, vol.IV, p.160) Suyūṭī attributes it to all of them Abū al-Aswad, Yaḥya, and al-Ḥasan adding Naṣr, but considering the attribution to Abū al-Aswad the most accepted. Miftāḥ al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah, vol.II, p.24.

2. al-Muḥkam, p.6.

3. Ṣubḥ al-A<sup>C</sup>shā, vol.III, p.156.

4. al-Muḥkam, pp.18-19.

5. ibid., pp.19-20 and 22-23.

Among the scholars there were many who disliked this idea as they disapproved of any change or development in the orthography of the maṣāḥif,<sup>1</sup> and because for them it was easier to read the maṣāḥif in their original form since the actual recitation of the Qur'ān depends on the riwāyah.<sup>2</sup> Indeed for a long time after the introduction of naqt the idea was so disliked by the scholars and men of letters that they used to consider the use of naqt in letters as an insult.<sup>3</sup>

The third step in the development of the orthography of the maṣāḥif was that of al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 170/786) who introduced a new system of symbols (ḥarakāt) for the I<sup>C</sup>rāb. It was not applied immediately to the maṣāḥif, for the scribes disliked what they called Naqt al-Shi<sup>C</sup>r and were unwilling to use this new system in place of the Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb of Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī, since they were used to it and regarded as the way of the salaf.<sup>4</sup>

The ḥarakāt symbols of al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad eventually dominated and replaced the Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb.<sup>5</sup> In addition he introduced into his new system of orthography the signs of Hamz, Tashdīd, Rawm and Ishmām.<sup>6</sup> The consonantal spelling of the Qur'ān remained unaltered as the vast majority of the scholars were firmly against any change. They argued that the maṣāḥif should remain as they have come to us from the companions, and the orthography is argued to be tawqīf.<sup>7</sup>

1. ibid., pp.10-11 where he mentions the names of some eminent scholars like Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Umar, Qatādah, Ibn Sīrīn, Mālik b. Anas and Ahmad b. Hanbal.

2. Ibn Taymiyyah, Fatāwā, vol.XII, pp.100-101.

3. al-Sūlī, Adab al-Kuttāb, p.61.

4. al-Muhkam, pp.22 and 43.

5. Itqān, vol.IV, p.162.

6. al-Muhkam, p.6.

7. ibid., p.17 and Īqāz al-A<sup>C</sup>lām, Passim.

Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Mālik b. Anas, Ahmad b. Hanbal, and al-Bayhaqī are reported to have objected to any change in the orthography of the maṣāḥif.<sup>1</sup> al-Zamakhsharī seems to have supported this view as he states that "the orthography of the maṣāḥif is sunnah, and it should not be changed".<sup>2</sup>

The Islamic Institutions have supported this view to the present day, for the maṣāḥif are printed only according to the traditional orthography.<sup>3</sup>

Certain scholars argue however that the orthography of the maṣāḥif is convention and that is permissible for people to write their maṣāḥif in accordance with the new orthography. Ibn al-Bāqillānī is reported to have supported this view, stating that there is no evidence from the Qur'ān or sunnah or consensus or analogy, that there is any fixed way of writing. Thus in his view, any orthography which gives the correct reading and is easy to follow is permitted.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Khaldūn supports this view and argues that the art of orthography is merely conventional and was not perfect when the maṣāḥif were compiled and that there is no particular point in keeping the old orthography and that there is no reason why the maṣāḥif should not be written according to the new system.<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., p.11, Itqān, vol.IV, pp.146-147, Miftāḥ al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah, vol.II, p.225, al-Burhān fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān, vol.I, pp.379-88.

2. al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.265.

3. Rūstūfadūnī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān wa-al-Maṣāḥif, p.12, al-Shinqīṭī, Īqāz al-A<sup>C</sup>lam li-Wujūb Ittibā<sup>C</sup> Rasm al-Muṣḥaf al-Imām, al-Ḥaddād, Khulāṣat al-Nuṣūṣ al-Jaliyyah, pp.11-16, Makhḷūf, <sup>C</sup>Unwān al-Bayān, pp.72-78.

4. Tafsīr al-Marāghī, vol.I, pp.13-14.

5. al-Muqaddimah, p.457.

Finally, al-<sup>C</sup>Izz b. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Salām is reported to have maintained that it is not only permitted but is necessary (wājib) that the maṣāḥif should be written according to the new orthography so that uneducated people may not fall into error.<sup>1</sup> al-Zarkashī opts for this view while adding that the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic orthography should also be preserved and kept as a precious inheritance.<sup>2</sup> al-Marāghī adopts this view stating that he, for the same reason as that given by al-<sup>C</sup>Izz b. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Salām preferred to write the verses while writing his tafsīr according to the new orthography, because he says, at the present time people are more eager for it than they used to in the time of al-<sup>C</sup>Izz.<sup>3</sup>

However, according to the general belief the orthography of the maṣāḥif should not be altered since, as Ibn al-Jazarī says, this orthography accommodates the variant readings of the Qur'ān in accordance with the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf.<sup>4</sup> al-Dānī states that the differences between maṣāḥif in preserving or omitting certain letters and words is because of the need to preserve all the ahruf revealed to the Prophet and received by the companions.<sup>5</sup>

The most practical way of dealing with this problem may perhaps be that adopted in certain maṣāḥif intended for learners, in which the words which differ in writing from the contemporary orthography are

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1. al-Burhān fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.379.

2. ibid.

3. Tafsīr al-Marāghī, vol.I, p.15.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.12.

5. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.114. Examples will be forthcoming, 134f.

explained in the margins.<sup>1</sup> This system helps the contemporary reader, particularly the learners, while preserving the inherited orthography of the maṣāḥif.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Abī Dāwūd attributes to al-Hajjāj the introduction of certain consonantal and orthographical modifications in eleven places in the Qur'ān. According to him they are as follows:

1. Verse 259, S.II, the word "Yatasanna", was changed to "Yatasannah"
2. " 48, S.IV, " " "Sharī<sup>C</sup>atan" " " "Shir<sup>C</sup>atan"
3. " 22, S.X " " "Yanshurukum" was changed to "Yusayyirukum"
4. Verse 45, SXII, the word "'Ātikum" was changed to "'Unabbi'ukum"
5. " 58,59, S.XXIII, the word "Lillāh" occurs three times, the last two of them being changed to be "Allāh"
6. Verse 116, S.XXVI, the word "al-Mukhrajīn" was changed to "al-Marjūmīn"
7. Verse 167, SXXVI, the word "al-Marjūmīn" was changed to "al-Mukhrajīn"
8. Verse 32, S.XXXXIII, the word "Ma<sup>C</sup>ā'ishahum" was changed to "Ma<sup>C</sup>īshatahum"
9. Verse 15, S.XLCII, the word "Yāsin" was changed to "Āsin"
10. Verse 7, S.LVII, " " "Ittaqaw" " " "Anfaqū"
11. Verse 24, S.LXXXI, " " "Zanīn" " " "Danīn"<sup>3</sup>

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1. This method was adopted recently in al-Muṣḥaf al-Muyassar, by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Jalīl <sup>C</sup>Isā, and Muṣḥaf al-Shurūq al-Mufassar.

2. Mālik b. Anas is reported to have agreed to write maṣāḥif for learners in the standard orthography. See, al-Dānī, al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif, p.11.

3. al-Maṣāḥif, pp.49-50 and 117-118.

However this report of Ibn Abī Dāwūd is not regarded as authentic for several reasons. First, the isnād of this riwāyah is not sound since the author cites an unnamed book by his father and two obscure and unacceptable ruwāt in the isnād.<sup>1</sup> Second, Ibn Abī Dāwūd is the only source for this information, bearing in mind the fact that his scholarship had been discredited by his own father.<sup>2</sup> Third, al-Ḥajjāj would have been opposed by his opponents, in his time or later, if he had made this alleged modification.<sup>3</sup> Fourth, Ibn Abī Dāwūd says - on the same page - of <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Ziyād that he asked Yazīd al-Fārisī to add the letter (alif) twice in the middle and the end of qālū and kānū. It is said that he thus added two thousand (alifs) into the muṣḥaf.<sup>4</sup> al-Ḥajjāj is said to have objected to this, even though no alteration in the meaning of the text would be involved, which makes it most unlikely that he would himself have made any innovations. In any case it is said that

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1. al-Maṣāḥif, p.117, al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, vol.VIII, pp.166-167, and vol.V, pp.89-115, al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Du<sup>C</sup>afā' al-Saghīr, p.76.
  2. Tadhkirat al-Huffāz, vol.II, pp.770-772, Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāz, pp.75-76
  3. See for example Tārīkh al-Tabarī, vol.VI, Passim, Ibn Kathīr. al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, vol.IX, pp.117-139, and Tārīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāt, pt.I, pp.340-419.
  4. al-Maṣāḥif, p.117. The isnād includes Yazīd al-Fārisī who was regarded as weak, see p.63 of Chapter 2. However according to al-Dānī, the omission of alif after the wāw of plural was consistent, except in a few cases of which he gives examples. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, pp.26-27.

Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd read lillāh in three places in S.XXIII, 58-59, while the people of Iraq read lillāh in the first place and Allāh in the other two,<sup>1</sup> while again in the muṣḥaf al-Imām and the muṣḥaf of Baṣrah Allāh occurred on the first two occasions and lillāh on the third.<sup>2</sup> Thus we can see that all of these variants existed before the time of al-Ḥajjāj and that therefore he can have had nothing to do with the matter. In fact references can be given to show that all of these spellings given by al-Dānī predate al-Ḥajjāj, although it is not necessary to quote them here. Finally if al-Ḥajjāj's aim was to correct acknowledged errors in the text we would not expect any of these spellings to be preserved in the accepted readings, as in fact they are.

Some examples are accepted in both forms among the Qurra' such as the first example while others are not as in S.XXVI, 116 and 167 which are not found in any source as to be read except in their present forms. However, as regards the orthography of these words they were not apparently dotted before al-Ḥajjāj. Thus their readings were governed only by riwāyah and what can be attributed to al-Ḥajjāj is in fact only the introduction of Naqt of al-<sup>C</sup>jām throughout the maṣāḥif and not only in these particular examples. The muṣḥaf continued to be read according to the riwāyah, and the vocalisation and dotting was in accordance with this.

Jeffery regards this supposed consonantal and orthographical modification as "an entirely new recension of the Qur'ān" and maintains

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1. Muqiddimatān, p.119.

2. Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, pp.117-118.

that "this new text promulgated by al-Ḥajjāj seems to have undergone more or less extensive alterations".<sup>1</sup> Indeed he exaggerates the role of al-Ḥajjāj as stated in the Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif<sup>2</sup> to the extent of claiming that "If this is so, our textus receptus is not based on the recension of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, but on that of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf".<sup>3</sup>

However al-Ḥajjāj had done nothing except to sanction the diacritic points introduced by scholars whom he had appointed for the purpose.<sup>4</sup> He is also reported to have distributed copies of <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif to the Metropolitan cities, including Egypt, whose Governor, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-<sup>C</sup>Azīz b. Marwān, took offence, regarding it as an insult to send a muṣḥaf to him, for he felt that he had no need of the work of al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, nothing can be attributed to al-Ḥajjāj as regards the maṣāḥif apart from the diacritic points which were introduced by certain scholars appointed by al-Ḥajjāj who himself was commanded by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.<sup>6</sup>

The next step after the introduction of vocalisation and diacritic points was the addition of titles of sūras with an indication of their beginnings and endings<sup>7</sup> and the place of their revelation<sup>8</sup> and a sign

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1. "The Textual History of the Qur'ān", Journal of Middle Eastern Society, Spring 1947, p.45.

2. p.117.

3. ibid.

4. See p.108 of this chapter.

5. Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ Miṣr Wa-Akḥbāruḥā, pp.117-118.

6. See p. 108 of this chapter.

7. al-Muḥkam, pp.16-17.

8. Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, p.78.



consisting of three dots at the end of each verse.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore the verses were divided into portions of akhmās (fives) and a<sup>c</sup>shār (tens)<sup>2</sup> and then the muṣḥaf was divided into thirty parts (ajzā') and each juz' into two divisions (ḥizb) and each ḥizb into four arbā<sup>c</sup>.<sup>3</sup> In addition signs were introduced for all the above mentioned innovations. The signs were introduced in different colours into the maṣāḥif in their manuscript forms.

However, these coloured signs, which existed for a long time as long as maṣāḥif were written by hand, could not continue with the appearance of printed texts, due to the difficulty of dealing with them in the printing press.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, certain additions/signs were introduced in printed maṣāḥif, for example the signs of the six kinds of awqāf al-tilāwah (pauses) and sajdāt al-tilāwa, which were initiated by the Egyptian editorial committees and followed by other committees of maṣāḥif.<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., p.17.

2. ibid., pp.14-15.

3. al-Burhān, vol.I, p.250, Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, p.78.

4. Introduction of the editorial committee of the Muṣḥaf al-Malik annexed to the Khātimah of the first edition of 1337 A.H., and Ma<sup>c</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, pp.129-130.

5. ibid., Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, pp.91-94.

The calligraphy of the maṣāḥif remained unchanged in the kufic form until the late years of the fourth century A.H.<sup>1</sup> A new development in this field was the introduction of khatt al-thuluth and then naskh which eventually dominated.<sup>2</sup> khatt al-naskh is considered the most beautiful one for the maṣāḥif, and other kinds like ruqʿah, dīwānī, fārisī, siyāqat and shikastah are said not to be suitable for the maṣāḥif, because the rules for them are that they should not be vocalised while the maṣāḥif should be vocalised to save the reader from committing errors.<sup>3</sup>

The first printed muṣḥaf was that produced in Venice in 1530, but it was not distributed because the church authorities had it destroyed immediately.<sup>4</sup> Thus the first printed muṣḥaf appeared in 1649 in Hamburg, and another appeared nearly half a century later in 1698 in Padua. This was in two big volumes under the supervision of Marracci. Fourthly it was published under the supervision of

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1. al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.160, Kashf al-Zunūn, vol.I, pp.710-711, Ḥājjī Khalīfah points out (p.711) that Abū ʿAlī b. Muqlah (d. 328 A.H.) was the first who introduced al-Khatt al-Badīʿ and that he was followed by ʿAlī b. Hilāl who is known as Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 413 A.H.) the best calligrapher of his time. There is a copy of a muṣḥaf written by Ibn al-Bawwāb which exists today in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.
  2. al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.140.
  3. ibid.
  4. al-Ṣāliḥ, Mabāḥith fī ʿUlum al-Qur'ān, p.99.

Mawlānā <sup>C</sup>Uthmān three times, in 1787, 1790 and 1798 respectively at St Petersburg and fifthly, at Kazan three times in 1803, 1819 and 1839.<sup>1</sup>

It was printed lithographically for the first time in Iran in Tehran in 1828 and again in Tabriz in 1833.<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter, under the supervision of Flügel, three editions of the mushaf appeared in 1834, 1842 and 1870, at Leipzig.

It was printed for the first time in India between the years (1280-82/1863-65), under the supervision of Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Makhdūm and Mawlawī Muḥammad <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ, being revised by their Shaykh Mawlawī Maḥbūb <sup>C</sup>Alī.

The first Turkish printed edition of the mushaf appeared in (1297/1879). This publication was in the calligraphy of Ḥāfiẓ <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.<sup>3</sup> The first mushaf printed in perfect accordance with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic orthography was that published under the supervision of Shaykh Ridwān b. Muḥammad al-Mukhallilātī in Egypt in (1308/1886).<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the mushaf was printed under the supervision of the Mashyakhat al-Azhar and the committee appointed by King Fu'ād of Egypt. This mushaf is called Mushaf al-Malik Fu'ād, and its first edition appeared in (1337/1918). It has been re-edited and re-published several times since then. This edition is said to be unanimously considered the best edition of the mushaf.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Fendik, Kitāb Iktifā' al-Qanū<sup>C</sup>bimā Huwa Matbū<sup>C</sup>, pp.111-112.

2. al-Ṣāliḥ, Mabāḥith fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān, p.99.

3. Fendik, Kitāb Iktifā' al-Qanū<sup>C</sup>bimā Huwa Matbū<sup>C</sup>, p.112.

4. Tārīkh al-Mushaf al-Sharīf, pp.91-92.

5. al-Ṣāliḥ, Mābāḥith fī <sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qur'ān, p.100, but the author has wrongly put the date as 1342 A.H. (1923) while it is in fact 1337, see Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Masāḥif, p.103.

However, all the above mentioned editions were according to the reading of Hafs from <sup>C</sup>Āsim, which is the common reading which dominates the Muslim world. The edition of the muṣḥaf according to the reading of Warsh From Nāfi<sup>C</sup> appeared for the first time in (1349/1930) in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Various editions of Warsh have been printed in kūfic or standard naskh in different places in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and very recently in Libya. This reading comes in the second place in common use after Hafs and it is the common reading in North and West Africa and in some parts of the Sudan and Egypt.

The third most common reading in some parts of North Africa is the reading of Qālūn from Nāfi<sup>C</sup>. The first printed muṣḥaf according to this reading appeared in Tunisia (in 1401/1981) then in Libya.

Finally, the muṣḥaf was printed for the first time according to the reading of al-Dūrī from Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr, in the Sudan in (1398/1978). This reading is the most common reading in the Sudan, and it is used in some parts of Egypt and Chad. These four maṣāḥif represent the common readings used for public purposes in the Islamic world today. However the remaining canonical readings are known to a considerable number of readers who have graduated from the Institutes of Qirā'āt of al-Azhar and of the Sudan and many others.

At the present time new means of recording have been introduced in the field of Qur'ān studies, and all canonical readings of the Qur'ān have been recorded orally by famous leading Qurra' in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ma<sup>C</sup>a al-Maṣāḥif, p.103.

2. For more information about this project see al-Sa<sup>C</sup>īd, al-Muṣḥaf al-Murattal, Cairo, second edition, 1978.

We may say in conclusion of this chapter that the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif include certain ahruf, being more than one. The ahruf included in the maṣāḥif are these which can be accommodated in the orthography of the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif which correspond with the final revealed version. As regards the written text it has been recorded according to one ḥarf and permission to read the other various readings was only in the recitation provided that it is read as it has been taught. The maṣāḥif were not vocalised or dotted, this having been introduced in stages, first by Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī who was asked to carry out the task when Lahn appeared and then during the reign of <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān to make reading easier. The orthography of the maṣāḥif remained unchanged. Printed maṣāḥif today represent the four dominant readings of Ḥafṣ, Warsh, Qālūn and al-Dūrī.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ʿUTHMĀNIC MAṢĀHIF AND THE PERSONAL CODICES OF THE COMPANIONS AND SUCCESSORS

## CHAPTER 4

### THE <sup>C</sup>UTHMĀNIC MAṢĀHIF AND THE PERSONAL CODICES OF THE COMPANIONS AND SUCCESSORS

There are quite a considerable number of Qirā'āt attributed to the companions which differ from the maṣāḥif compiled by <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, which are still to be found in the old books of Tafsīr and al-Qirā'āt al-Shādhah (anomalous readings).<sup>1</sup>

These divergent readings can be classified into categories as follows:

1. The problem of addition and omission of certain sūras  
It is related that Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b added to his muṣḥaf two sūras of al-Qunūt<sup>2</sup> and that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd omitted from his muṣḥaf three sūras, the Fātiḥah and the Mu<sup>C</sup>awwidhatān, the two final sūras.<sup>3</sup>

Different views and interpretations have been brought to bear on the discussion of this problem.

- (a) A group of scholars hold a view that the story is untrue and fabricated.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See for example Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Muhtasib fī Shawādh al-Qirā'at of Ibn Jinnī and al-Mukhtaṣar fī Shawādh al-Qirā'āt of Ibn Khālawayh.
  2. Muqaddimatān, p.75 and Itqān, vol.I, p.182.
  3. Muqaddimatān, p.75 and Itqān, vol.I, p.183.
  4. See for example Ibn Hazm, al-Fiṣal Min al-Milal wa-al-Nihal, vol.II, p.77, Muqaddimat Kitāb al-Mabānī, p.75 and Itqān, vol.I, pp.220-221.

(b) In another attempt to explain this problem it is said that Ubayy and Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd were confused, since they first used to hear the Prophet recite al-Qunūt in the prayers, particularly in the prayer of al-Witr, the most important sunnah after the obligatory five daily prayers and that Ubayy came to believe that they were from the Qur'ān. Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd on the other hand is said to have thought that the last two sūras of the muṣḥaf were not from the Qur'ān because he used to see the Prophet recite them as an incantation for al-Hasan and al-Husayn.<sup>1</sup> However this interpretation is rejected by certain scholars on various grounds. The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī states that Ubayy's profound knowledge of the Qur'ān would have protected him from being unable to distinguish what is the Qur'ān from what is not. This is supported by the fact that the transmission of Qirā'ah from him to the A'immaḥ (leading experts in Qirā'ah) does not mention that Ubayy taught them al-Qunūt as part of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Bāqillānī suggests that Ubayy might have written al-Qunūt on the back of his muṣḥaf as a Du<sup>C</sup>ā' "as we do on our maṣāḥif".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he studies in a special chapter the stylistic differences between the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> On this basis he concludes that it is impossible that the companions could not distinguish between the Qur'ān and what is not the Qur'ān and that the number of sūras was known to them.<sup>5</sup> Indeed we find in support of this view many authorities who confirm that what is attributed to Ubayy is no more than Du<sup>C</sup>ā' and they call it Du<sup>C</sup>ā' al-Qunūt.<sup>6</sup>

1. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.53 and vol.XX, p.251. Muqaddimatān, p.75 and Ibn al-Bāqillānī, I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, p.291.

2. Muqaddimatān, p.75.

3. I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, pp.291-292.

4. ibid., pp.291-297.

5. ibid., p.292.

6. See for example Muqātil, Tafsīr al-Khams Mi'at Āyah, p.5, and al-Akhfash, Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān, vol.II, p.551.



- (c) The third view held in the discussion of this problem is that attributed to certain scholars which maintains that the reason that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd did not write those sūras was because they were memorised by all Muslims, even the children. Thus there was no fear that they might have been forgotten. Otherwise, as the author of Kitāb al-Mabānī states, how could Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd with his wide knowledge not be aware of the most famous, widely known and the easiest sūras of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> However Ibn al-Anbārī is reported to have rejected this view on the grounds that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd included in his muṣḥaf short sūras like al-Kawthar ( CVIII) al-Naṣr ( CX) and al-Ikhlās (CXII ) which are similar in length to al-Muṣawwidhatān.<sup>2</sup> It is understandable in his opinion, however that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd did not write the Fātiḥah which could not be forgotten because it is recited in all prayers and Rak'a's.<sup>3</sup> This is supported by the answer of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd when he was asked why he did not write it in his muṣḥaf. He is reported to have answered "If I wrote it I would have written it with every sūrah" meaning - as Ibn al-Anbārī interprets this - that a portion of the Qur'ān is recited during every ṣalāt and that this must be preceded by the Fātiḥah.<sup>4</sup>
- (d) The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī states that it might be that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd did not include them because he wanted to write only what he heard directly from the Prophet.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Muqaddimatān, pp.96-97, Qurṭubī, vol.XX, p.251.

2. Qurṭubī, vol.XX, p.251.

3. ibid., - vol.I, p.53.

4. ibid.

5. Muqaddimatān, p.97.

However this view seems not to be sound for the reason that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd himself is reported to have said "I have been taught seventy sūras directly from the mouth of the Prophet...",<sup>1</sup> which indicates that he learned the rest of the sūras from other companions. Thus his mushaf contains both the sūras he heard from the Prophet and those which he learned from the companions.

- (e) al-Qurtubī attributes to Yazīd b. Hārūn the view that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd died before he had completed the memorisation of all the sūras. However al-Qurtubī objects to this view,<sup>2</sup> which indeed has no evidence to support it. The alleged exclusion of these sūras from the mushaf of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd does not mean that they were not memorised by him for as is well known they are among the shortest and easiest sūras of the Qur'ān.
- (f) Furthermore Ibn al-Bāqillānī states that all these riwāyas are isolated reports which should not be regarded as reliable. In addition he considers all differences attributed to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd as false and related by ignorant (people), although he does not deny that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd like any other hāfiz might fall into error in certain hurūf. He adds that if Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd had denied these two sealing sūras the companions would have disputed with him and that this would have become widely known, since quarrels on matters of much lesser importance have been reported to us. Also, he says, the consensus of the companions on the compilation of mushaf cannot be impugned by these anomalous invented narrations.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol.V, pp.258-259 and Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, pp.46-47.

2. Qurtubī, vol.I, pp.53 and 58, and vol.XX, p.251.

3. I<sup>C</sup>jāz al-Qur'ān, pp.291-292.

Finally there are quite a considerable number of ahādīth referring to the position of these sūras,<sup>1</sup> the story behind their revelation<sup>2</sup> and above all to the recitation of them by the Prophet while at home and travelling<sup>3</sup> which indicate clearly that Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd was certainly aware of them. Thus these narrations attributed to Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b and <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd cannot be regarded as authentic.

## 2. The problem of the interpolation of explanatory material

The interpolation of certain explanatory material, consisting of one or more words, into the text of the Qur'ān is attributed to the personal codices of some of the companions. Some examples of this will be quoted and discussed as follows:

(a) Ibn al-Zubayr is reported to have added the words

كنتم خير<sup>1</sup> ويستغيثون بالله على ما أصابهم  
أمة أخرجت للناس تأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر (س. III, 104)

The author of the Kitāb al-Mabānī says that this addition, if it is accepted as authentic, is certainly a gloss by Ibn al-Zubayr and his own words, and that some narrators were confused and incorporated it into the text. He supports this by stating that these very same words were attributed to

1. See for example: al-Albānī, al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah, vol. II, pp. 582-583, Ḥadīth no. 891 and p. 249. Ḥadīth no. 645; Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol. II, pp. 152-153.

2. Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol. II, pp. 152-153, al-Suyūtī, Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl, pp. 238-239.

3. Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol. II, p. 152.

4. al-Maṣāhif, pp. 82-83, Muqaddimatān, p. 102 and Materials, p. 227.

<sup>c</sup>Uthmān himself, which suggests that he recited them in his preaching as an explanation only, and not as part of the Qur'ān, since otherwise he would have added them to his own al-Muṣḥaf al-Imām.<sup>1</sup>

- (b) Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abbās is reported to have added the words  
 ان الساعة آتية after من نفسي  
 (XX, 15).<sup>2</sup> This is also

attributed to Ubayy b. Ka<sup>c</sup>b with the further words

3 من نفسي فكيف اطلعكم عليها

The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī states that if the addition is regarded as authentic it is an explanatory addition to the text and that certain narrators were confused and incorporated them into the text.

Furthermore the isnād of the riwāyah to Ubayy is maqtū<sup>c</sup> (interrupted) and the transmission of the Qirā'ah from Ubayy to Abū <sup>c</sup>Amr and Ibn Kathīr invalidates it.<sup>4</sup>

- (c) <sup>c</sup>Alī is reported to have added the words ونواب الدهر  
 immediately after والعصر (CIII, 1).<sup>5</sup>

The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī argues that this attribution to <sup>c</sup>Alī is invalid on the ground that the Qirā'ah of Abū <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, the transmitter of the Qirā'ah from <sup>c</sup>Alī and his close student who also taught al-Hasan and al-Husayn, corresponds to al-Muṣḥaf al-Imām and in it there is no mention of this addition.

Secondly, if the attribution to <sup>c</sup>Alī were authentic,

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1. Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān, p.227.

2. ibid., p.201.

3. ibid., p.146.

4. Muqaddimatān, p.102.

5. Materials, p.193.

he would have incorporated it into the text and would have not abandoned these words, the result of which would have been to decrease the reward of reciter and alter a meaning wanted by Allāh. This therefore suggests that the narrator either lied or forgot. Thirdly, we must take into account the unanimous agreement of the Muslims on al-Mushaf al-Imām, so that if anyone alleges any single addition or omission that contradicts the consensus it is no different from claiming that the obligatory prayer are fifty, that marrying nine wives is allowed, or that fasting more than the month of Ramādān is a duty.<sup>1</sup>

- (d) Sa<sup>c</sup>d b. Abī Waqqās is reported to have added the two words وله أخ من أم after أخت (IV, 12).<sup>2</sup> This addition, as al-Suyūṭī points out, is regarded as tafsīr.<sup>3</sup> However, it is unanimously agreed that this tafsīr is correct.<sup>4</sup>
- (e) It is attributed to Ubayy b. Ka<sup>c</sup>b that he added the sentence ولو صيتم كما حوا لفسد المسجد الحرام to إذ جعل الذين كفروا في قلوبهم الحمية حمية الجاهلية (XLVIII, 26).<sup>5</sup> Umar is reported to have objected to this reading of Ubayy, and to have asked Zayd to read it. He read it according to the general reading, after which he agreed with Zayd. It is also reported

1. Muqaddimatān, pp.103-104.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.216.

3. ibid.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.28.

5. al-Hākim, al-Mustadrak <sup>c</sup>Alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn, vol.II, pp.225-226.

that Ubayy defended his reading and that <sup>C</sup>Umar agreed to let him read it accordingly.<sup>1</sup> The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī objects to this report as a strange one which cannot be reconciled with the book received by the Prophet having been preserved and transmitted from him. In addition Ubayy might have reported that reading before its abrogation, particularly before the final revealed version. This is supported by the transmission of a Qirā'ah from Ubayy to Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far, Ibn Kathīr and Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr, who transmitted from Ubayy the ways of reading in madd (prolongation) and shadd (doubling), but did not report this addition. Furthermore, he points out, this addition differs from the Qur'ān stylistically. Finally, he asks how it could be that <sup>C</sup>Umar was not aware of this addition since he heard this sūrah directly from the Prophet on the occasion of Hudaybiyyah.<sup>2</sup>

- (f) It is attributed to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd that he added the word فصيام ثلاثة أيام متتابعات to ( S.V, 91 ).<sup>3</sup> Discussing this example, al-Ghazzālī argues that these readings differ from the muṣḥaf and are to be attributed to the companions. They are not part of the Qur'ān, because the Qur'ān is not substantiated except by Tawātur. He considers the above reading attributed to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd and regards it as not Mutawātir, and therefore not from the Qur'ān. Consequently it should be considered as his interpretation of the verse and his madhhab. He quotes Abū Ḥanīfah

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1. ibid.

2. Muqaddimatān, pp.91-93.

3. Qurtubī, vol.VI, p.283.

as having adopted this interpretation as wājib (obligation). Although Abū Hanīfah did not accept this addition as part of the Qur'ān, he accepted it as an isolated report which in his view was sufficient evidence for practice. Nevertheless, al-Ghazzālī objects to Abū Hanīfah's view and conclude that this addition is not even acceptable as an isolated report for practice, because it has not been reported to us as a sunnah heard from the Prophet.<sup>1</sup> Among the successors, al-Hasan al-Basrī is reported to have added the words الْوُرُودُ الدُّخُولُ to (XIX, 71).<sup>2</sup> al-Suyutī quotes Ibn al-Anbārī as having said that this addition is an interpretation of al-Hasan himself of the meaning of the word الْوُرُودُ, but that some narrators made a mistake and incorporated it into the text.<sup>3</sup> Concerning this general problem of the interpolation of explanatory material, Ibn al-Jazarī points out that the companions may have written interpretations in their readings although they were sure of what they had been taught as the Qur'ān. In addition he states that it is not true that the companions used to allow reading the Qur'ān by meaning as opposed to the literal text.<sup>4</sup> Finally Abū Hayyān maintains that the majority of readings attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd are suspected of being Shi'ite inventions.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Mustaṣfā, vol.I, p.102.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.216.

3. ibid.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.321-330, Munjid, pp.17-18 and for more discussion see Chapter 7.

5. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.I, p.161.

3. A difference in word order is attributed to certain companions. For example Abū Bakr is reported to have read وجاءت سكرة الحق 1 while it is in the mushaf as (S.L, XIX) وجاءت سكرة الموت بالحق 1. Although certain scholars quoted as an example of one of the seven ahruf,<sup>2</sup> it is reported by Ā'ishah that she heard her father Abū Bakr in his final illness reciting this verse in the same way as it occurs in the mushaf.<sup>3</sup> Another example of this is that it is attributed to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās that he read إذا جاء فتح الله والنصر 4 while in the mushaf it is found as (S.CX, 1) إذا جاء نصر الله والفتح 4. However, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās is reported to have interpreted this sūrah and read it in accordance with the mushaf.<sup>5</sup>

4. A difference in the word which changes its consonantal outline in the orthography and does not change its meaning, i.e. synonyms. For example, it is attributed to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd that he read the word زقية (S.XXXVI, 29) as صيحة this being quoted by certain scholars as an example of one of the seven ahruf.<sup>6</sup> However, in their view this reading was eventually no longer allowed because of the abrogation of certain ahruf.<sup>7</sup>

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.26-27.

2. See Chapter 1, pp.21-22.

3. Qurtubī, vol.XVII, pp.12-13.

4. Materials, p.208.

5. Qurtubī, vol.XX, p.232.

6. Materials, p.78.

7. See pp.16-17 and 21-22, Chapter 1.



<sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd is reported to have read the word كَالْعَمَلِ (C1,4) as <sup>1</sup> كَالصُّوفِ <sup>C</sup>Umar is also reported to have read the word فَاسْعَوْا (LXII, 9) as <sup>2</sup> فَاَمْضُوا and it is attributed to Ubayy that he read لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انْظُرُوا

<sup>3</sup> لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اَمْطَلُونَا اَمْ خَرُونَا ... اَمْ رَقَبُونَا (S.LVII, 13) as

These examples were quoted by certain scholars as examples of one of the seven ahruf which were abrogated.<sup>4</sup>

5. A difference in the word which changes its consonantal outline and its meaning.

For example <sup>C</sup>Alī is reported to have read the word وَطَلَحَ of (S.LVI, 29) as <sup>5</sup> وَطَلَجَ This was quoted by certain scholars as an example of one of the seven ahruf which was abrogated.<sup>6</sup>

In all of these cases as we have seen in Chapter 3, it is arguable whether a certain harf was abrogated during the lifetime of the Prophet or whether the permission to read in this way was removed when <sup>C</sup>Uthman issued his masāhif.<sup>7</sup>

1. Materials, p.111.

2. ibid., p.221.

3. ibid., p.169.

4. See p.16-17 and 21-22 Chapter 1.

5. Materials, p.191.

6. See pp.16-17 and 21-22 Chapter 1.

7. pp.105-106 above.

Alternatively, these synonyms may be quite fictitious.  
Whatever the case the reading was not left to the free choice of the individual, but was subject to the riwāyah.

As regards the additional interpretations which were attributed to the personal codices, Goldziher expressed doubts about their being part of the original text, maintaining that it is not known yet whether they are original or not and that they were allowed into the text only as interpretations.<sup>1</sup> On the same page however he contradicts himself when he mentions that certain later scholars considered these additional interpretations as part of the text, and supports this view, arguing that the companions were reported as having permitted the writing of this kind of additional interpretation in the muṣḥaf provided that they did not regard them as Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> However, the additional interpretations are not part of the original text of the Qur'ān and are not to be confused with the muṣḥaf, since it was clearly stated the condition for using them was only as tafsīr and not as Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup>

However, in a comparison between the Uthmānic maṣāḥif and all personal codices of the companions it has been found that the differences are said to be in one hundred and twenty three places. In nine places two, three or four personal codices agree as against the Uthmānic maṣāḥif, but this is the maximum extent of agreement

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1. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.21.

2. ibid.

3. al-Qirā'āt Wa'l-Lahajāt, p.185.

among them. On the other hand Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd alone is reported to have been the sole reference for one hundred and two out of the total number.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore it is argued that the Qur'ān contains over seventy seven thousand words and that the number of words in which the personal codices differed from the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif is thus very small.<sup>2</sup> In this connection al-Jāḥiẓ is quoted as having said that "verily there are certain people who cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the Qur'ān and search for an addition or omission in it without the consent of the Prophet and consensus of the companions. However if some one had inserted a poetic verse in the poetry of Abū al-Shamaqmaq he would have been notorious among the ruwāt, let alone the book of Allāh almighty which is transmitted in Tawātur and sound chains and is recited day and night."<sup>3</sup>

Differences between the maṣāḥif of the amṣār

The metropolitan cities to which maṣāḥif were sent by <sup>C</sup>Uthman are

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1. Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Maṣāḥif, p.147

2. ibid.

3. Ma<sup>C</sup> al-Maṣāḥif, p.147.

reported to have differed in certain ahruf, as regards the addition or omission of certain letters or particles. In this respect it is said of the muṣḥaf of Kūfah that it differs from that of Baṣrah in five ahruf, for example in (S.XXI, 4) we find written in the Kufic muṣḥaf قَالَ while in the Baṣran we find قُلْ. Also, the Madinan muṣḥaf is reported to have differed from those of Iraq in twelve ahruf, for example in (S.II, 132) in the Madinan we find وَأَوْصَى while in the Iraqi we find وَوَصَّى.

Finally the maṣāḥif of Syria and Iraq are said to have differed in forty ahruf, for example in (S.V, 54) we find يَرْتَدُّ while in the latter we find يَرْتَدَّ.<sup>1</sup>

However, all examples are differences in letters between the maṣāḥif, except for two examples which are difference in particles. The first one is that of (S.IX, 100) where the word مِنْ is found in the muṣḥaf of Makkah, while it is omitted in the other maṣāḥif.<sup>2</sup> The second example is that of (S.LVII, 23) where the word هُوَ is omitted from the maṣāḥif of Madīnah and Shām although it exists in the maṣāḥif of other cities.<sup>3</sup> The differences of letters can be classified into various categories as follows:

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1. Muqaddimatān, pp.117-121, al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, pp.108-124.
  2. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.11 and Faṭḥ al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.30.
  3. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.115.

1. Morphological change, in (S.II, 132) وَأَوْصَى  
 and يَرْتَدُّ and بَرْتَدُّ . وَوَصَّى  
 in (S.V, 54).
2. Replacement of conjunction, in (S.XCI, 15) فَلَا يَخَافُ  
 and وَلَا يَخَافُ also in (S.XL, 26)  
 وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ and وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ
3. Omission of conjunction, in (S.V, 53) يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 and وَيَقُولُ
4. Consonantal differences in (S.X, 22) يُسَيِّرُكُمْ and يَنْشُرُكُمْ
5. Omission of pronoun suffixes in (S.XXXVI, 35) وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ  
 and وَمَا عَمِلَتْ
6. Grammatical change in (S.LV, 78) ذَا الْجَلَالِ and ذُو الْجَلَالِ
7. Singular and dual alternation in (S.XXXXIII, 38) حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا  
 and جَاءَنَا
8. Singular and plural alternation in (S.X, 33) حَقَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ  
 and كَلِمَةٍ
9. Verbal change in (S.XVIII, 93) قُلْ and قَالَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَّ

The reason for these differences between the maṣāḥif is discussed by al-Dānī who maintains that all of the above mentioned differences are correct and authentic for they have been revealed and heard from the Prophet and that when ʿUthmān compiled the maṣāḥif and it was not possible to accommodate all these readings in one muṣḥaf, he distributed them in the maṣāḥif.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the author of Kitāb al-Mabānī studies all examples linguistically and concludes that they are all correct and sound. In addition he states that the examples studied did not differ due to any forgetfulness or mistake, but that they were made intentionally to substantiate all ahruf revealed and heard from the Prophet.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we can say that research confirms that the personal codices attributed to certain companions and their followers are transmitted in unauthentic chains and that they differ from each other and contradict the ʿUthmanic maṣāḥif. The additional interpolations are no more than explanatory material which they used to add to the text of the Qur'ān because they were their own personal codices and they were sure of not confusing them with the original text. The accounts attributed to ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd

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1. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.123.

2. Muqaddimatān, pp.121-133.

that he used to omit from his muṣḥaf the first and the last two sūras, and to Ubayy b. Ka<sup>c</sup>b that he used to write in his muṣḥaf al-Qunūt as a sūrah are absolutely groundless.

Finally the <sup>c</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif are reported to have differed in certain letters or particles, consisting of the addition or omission of letters except in two places where huwa and min are sometimes found and sometimes absent. These accounts are all authentic in their transmission and linguistically it is proved that in the Arabic language in which the Qur'ān has been revealed all these ways are acceptable and fluent Arabic.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE LANGUAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN



## CHAPTER 5

### THE LANGUAGE OF THE QUR'ĀN

In this chapter we propose to address ourselves to the thorny question of what type of Arabic the text of the Qur'ān with its variant readings represents. We do not intend to undertake a thorough grammatical and lexicographic analysis of the Qur'ān, which will be well beyond the scope of the present thesis; our purpose here is the more modest one of examining the information provided by classical Arab scholars and the theories of modern scholars in an attempt to decide whether the language of the Qur'ān represents Qurashī Arabic, whatever may be understood by this term, whether it is in 'standard Arabic' or 'poetic Koine' but reflecting Ḥijāzī features, or alternatively a Ḥijāzī version of the standard language, or whether it contains number of fluent dialects in addition to that of Quraysh.

It is hoped that this will pave the way to a better understanding of the problem of the seven ahruf, although we must add the qualification that the available data are not sufficient to allow more than a tentative conclusion on the subject.

The Qur'ān refers to the language in which it has been revealed as 'Arabic', without reference to any particular one of the various dialects of the Arabic language. In support of this there are a considerable number of verses of which we may quote a few examples:

- a. (S.XII, 2) "We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān in order that ye may learn wisdom."
- b. (S.XLIII, 3) "We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic that ye may be able to understand and learn wisdom."
- c. (S.XLI, 3) "A book whereof the verses are explained in detail; - A Qur'ān in Arabic for people who understand."
- d. (S.XXVI, 192-195) "Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: with it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth to thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue."
- e. (S.XXXIX, 28) "(It is) a Qur'ān in Arabic without any crookedness (therein) in order that they may guard against evil."

Ibn al-Anbārī (328/939) states that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the most eloquent, purest and clearest language of the Arabs, since the Qur'ān says: (S.XLIII, 3) "We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic that ye may be able to understand (and learn wisdom)", and (S.XLI, 44) "Had we sent this as A Qur'ān (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?" Say: "It is a guide and healing to those who believe.""<sup>1</sup> There is no reference, however, to any particular dialect in the sunnah, except for a few statements attributed to certain companions:

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1. Īdāh al-Waqf wa-al-Ibtidā', vol.I, p.12.

1. <sup>C</sup>Uthmān is reported to have commanded the committee appointed by him to compile the Qur'ān, all of whom were Qurashī except Zayd b. Thābit. "If you disagree with Zayd b. Thābit on any point in the Qur'ān, then write it in the dialect of Quraysh as the Qur'ān was revealed in their tongue."<sup>1</sup> He is also reported to have made the same statement when the scribes differed in writing the word al-Tābūt التابوت as to whether to write it with final hā' or tā'; eventually it was written with tā' according to the dialect of Quraysh.<sup>2</sup>
2. It is reported of <sup>C</sup>Umar that he wrote to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd that the Qur'ān had been revealed in the tongue of Quraysh and that he should teach people accordingly and not according to the language of Hudhayl.<sup>3</sup> It is elsewhere reported that <sup>C</sup>Umar said that the scribes of the maṣāḥif should be only from Quraysh and Thaqīf.<sup>4</sup>
3. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd is reported to have preferred the scribes of the maṣāḥif to be from Mudar.<sup>5</sup>

The scholars of the classical period are almost unanimous in agreeing that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the dialect (lughah) of Quraysh, and this view is also adopted by the majority of contemporary scholars. However it is not always clear what is meant by the term (lughah); does this refer to an actual dialect in

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479, al-Murshid al-Wājiz, p.92.
  2. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.20, Kitāb al-Zīnah, vol.I, p.141.
  3. Idāh al-Waqf wa-al-Ibtidā', vol.I, p.13, al-Muhtasib, vol.I, p.343, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.27.
  4. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.310, al-Sāhibī, p.28 and al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.211.
  5. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.310.

the full sense of the term, or perhaps to a Qurashī version of a standard literary language, which exhibits certain Qurashī features in the field of phonology, morphology and vocabulary? Is it even being claimed as do some scholars that the classical Arabic Fushā is identical with the speech of Quraysh?

The ancient scholars use the term 'lughah' in different contexts to mean 'lahjah' (dialect) as Abū<sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Alā' does when he distinguishes between 'lughah' and 'Arabiyyah' in that the latter is what agrees with the majority, while he calls what does not agree with them 'lughāt'.<sup>1</sup> In this connection al-Farrā' says about the two ways of pronouncing أسوة (iswah, or uswah) 'Wa-humā lughatān' meaning no more than dialects.<sup>2</sup> They also used to use the word 'lisān' (tongue) to mean 'lughah' which may be interpreted as 'lahjah' (dialect), and they used to interpret the word 'lahn' to mean 'lughah' i.e. 'lahjah'.<sup>3</sup> Sībawayh, however, uses the word 'lughah' to mean an acceptable form of 'Arabiyyah' and he for example says: "Lughah Li-Ahl al-Hijāz Wa-Hiya<sup>C</sup> Arabiyyah Jā'izah"<sup>4</sup> and "Wa-Hiya al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah al-Qadīmah al-Jayyidah".<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Zubaydī, Ṭabaqāt al-Nahwiyyīn Wa'l Lughawiyyīn, p.34.

2. al-Farrā', Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān, vol.II, p.339.

3. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, p.32.

4. al-Kitāb, vol.II, p.416.

5. ibid., p.424.

According to the ruwāt, the word 'lughāt' means exceptional and rare forms, and differences in the word as regards its meaning and morphology and grammar.<sup>1</sup>

Among modern Arab scholars the problem of 'lughah' and 'lahjah' is more carefully tackled and what is meant by both words is explained. al-Ghamrāwī states that the dominant view among the philologists is that Lughat Quraysh means no more than a dialect of a common language which is the existing Arabic language.<sup>2</sup> Hammūdah in his 'al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt'<sup>3</sup> studies both terms using modern linguistic methodology. According to him 'lahjah' refers to the way of pronunciation, the sound of words and phonetics.<sup>4</sup> This is mainly a question of accent, though minor variations in form of words or of meaning are also encompassed by this term. For the purpose of the following discussion we shall regard the term 'lughah' as meaning a form which is acceptable Arabic, but not used by the majority. It is important to realise that the concept of 'dialect' as it exists today was not recognised by early Arab writers and that attempts such as that of Rabin<sup>5</sup> to reconstruct dialects must be based on painstaking work, and are not likely to produce more than sketchy results.

We shall now examine the views of the scholars and then attempt to reach some conclusion on this question.

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1. al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī, Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.I, p.135.

2. al-Naqd al-Tahlīlī, p.210.

3. 1st ed., Cairo, 1368-1948.

4. ibid., pp.4-5.

5. Ancient West Arabian

The view that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the lughah (dialect) of Quraysh bases itself on the following arguments:

- a. The first people addressed by the Qur'ān were those of Quraysh who used to understand easily the language of the Qur'ān. In this connection certain verses are quoted and interpreted in favour of Quraysh; (S.XIV, 4) "We have sent not an apostle except (to each) in the language of his (own) people to make (things) clear to them", also (S.XXVI, 214) "And admonish thy nearest kinsmen".<sup>1</sup>
- b. The Prophet himself was a Qurashī and his sayings accordingly correspond with the language of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>
- c. The style of the sayings attributed to the companions and the people of their time belonging to Quraysh is said to have agreed with the language of the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup>
- d. In addition it may be pointed out that the consensus of all Arabs after Islam and the agreement among the scholars, narrators, Muḥaddithūn, and Mufasssirūn is that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the dialect of Quraysh, and that despite the quarrels and political disputes among the tribes and the existence of Shu<sup>c</sup>ūbiyyah on the part of Ḥimyar and of the non-Arabs there was never any objection to this.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for the language of the Quraysh having this superior position is said to be:

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1. Mushkil al-Āthār, vol.IV, p.185, Itqān, vol.I, p.135.
  2. Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī, p.110.
  3. ibid.
  4. ibid., pp.110-111.

- a. because of its high quality and fluency. In this connection the Prophet is reported to have said that "I am the most eloquent of you because I belong to Quraysh and was brought up in Sa<sup>C</sup>d b. Bakr".<sup>1</sup> The statement is attributed to Qatādah that Quraysh used to choose the best of the Arabs' tongue, so that their tongue became the best of all, and that accordingly the Qur'ān has been revealed in Quraysh's tongue.<sup>2</sup> Also, al-Fārābī is reported to have said that Quraysh used to be the best among the Arabs in choosing the most eloquent utterances and the easiest in pronunciation and the best in hearing and the clearest in expressing oneself.<sup>3</sup>

This superiority in the Arabic language is said to have been acquired by Quraysh as a result of their communication with other tribes in the course of their conflicts and cultural gatherings at <sup>C</sup>Ukāz and other markets. The Arabs used also to visit Makkah for religious purposes and trade.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Fāris states in his al-Ṣāhibī that delegations for pilgrimage and other purposes used to visit Makkah and that they used to ask Quraysh to arbitrate between them because of their eloquence and the perfection of their language. Hence Quraysh used to choose the best of other tribe's speech and poems and add it to their tongue. By doing so and adding to it their innate natural ability they became the most eloquent of the Arabs.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.309, Ibn al-Bāqillānī, Nukat al-Intisār, p.386 and al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.210.

2. Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.I, p.588.

3. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.211, al-Iqtirāh, p.22.

4. al-<sup>C</sup>Asr al-Jāhilī, p.133, Fī<sup>C</sup>Ilm al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Āmm, p.222, al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī, Tarīkh Adāb al-Arab, vol.I, pp.85-90, 2nd ed. 1940.

5. al-Ṣāhibī, pp.33-34.

- b. The second reason given for Quraysh having had this position is the fact that they were far away from neighbouring non-Arab states, and this - as Ibn Khaldūn puts it - protected Quraysh from non-Arab influences. According to philologists holding this view the acceptability of the dialects of the Arabs was in proportion to their vicinity to or distance from Quraysh.<sup>1</sup> al-Fārābī is quoted by al-Suyutī as having pointed out that the philologists ignored the Arab tribes who used to live in the neighbourhood of foreign nations.<sup>2</sup>
- c. Thirdly Quraysh were immune to pronunciation defects which were attributed to other dialects. In this connection there are many examples of such defects attributed to certain tribes of which a few examples may be quoted. Abū al-Abbās states in his 'Majālis Tha<sup>C</sup>lab'<sup>3</sup> that Quraysh have a high standard in fluency so that they did not have the <sup>C</sup>An<sup>C</sup>anah of Tamīm, Kashkashah of Rabī<sup>C</sup>ah, Kaskasah of Hawāzin, Tadajjū<sup>C</sup> of Qays, <sup>C</sup>Ajrafiyyah of Ḍabbah and Taltalah of Bahrā'. He only gives examples for <sup>C</sup>An<sup>C</sup>anah and Taltalah. The first example (<sup>C</sup>An<sup>C</sup>anah) is the changing of Alif to <sup>C</sup>Ayn as to say <sup>C</sup>Anna <sup>C</sup>Abda Allahi Qā'imun for Anna, while the second (Taltalah) is the pronunciation of the present tense prefixes with Kasrah as Ti<sup>C</sup>lamūna, Ti<sup>C</sup>qilūna and Tisma<sup>C</sup>ūna.<sup>4</sup>

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1. al-Muqaddimah, p.635.

2. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.212, al-Iqtirāḥ, p.23.

3. Edited by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Dār al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ārif, Cairo, Third ed. 1969.

4. ibid., vol.I, p.81.



More kinds of pronunciation defects were attributed to various dialects in other sources, among them the Fahfahah of Hudhayl which is the change of hā' to ᶜayn and the wakm and wahm of Kalb which means that the plural suffix -kum becomes -kim when the preceding vowel is kasrah. Thus they say ᶜalaykim and bikim. Wahm is the pronunciation of -hum as -him in such contexts as minhim, ᶜanhim and baynihim in all cases. The ᶜajᶜajah of Qudāᶜah consists of changing final -ī to -ij as in such words as tamīmīj for tamīmī. The istintā' of Saᶜd b. Bakr, Hudhayl, al-Azd, Qays and the anṣār is the changing of ᶜayn to nūn in the word anṭā for aᶜtā. Watm in the language of Yemen is the pronunciation of sīn as tā' for example al-nāt for al-nās. The lakhlahāniyyah of Shihṛ and Oman is saying masha allah for māshā'a allāh; the tumtumāniyyah of Ḥimyar is the use of the definite article -am instead of -al, e.g. ṭāba am hawā'u for ṭāba al-hawā'u.<sup>1</sup> Some of these features still exist in certain parts of Arabia. In this connection the kashkashah (i.e. the pronunciation of the fem. suffix -ik as -ish) may be mentioned as in Ṣanᶜā' and some other parts of Yemen it is still in use,<sup>2</sup> and the tumtumānnyyah is also referred to as being still in use in Ḥāshid, Arḥab, Khawlān and some other parts of Yemen. There is a ḥadīth quoted as using -am i.e. "Laysa min am-birri im-ṣiyāmu fī im-safar".<sup>3</sup>

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1. al-Muzhir, vol.I, pp.221-223.

2. Lahajāt al-Yaman Qadīman Wa-Ḥadīthan, pp.47-48.

3. ibid., p.20.

The factors which assisted the language of Quraysh in acquiring these superior features are said to be the following:

1. The religious factor in that the Arabs used to make the pilgrimage to Makkah where Quraysh were the servants of the house and the pilgrims and had the custody of the Ka<sup>c</sup>bah. So Quraysh were favoured and respected among all Arab tribes.<sup>1</sup>
2. Quraysh were tradesmen and merchants who used to travel to different places in Arabia, to Syria in the north and to Yemen in the south. Makkah itself used to be the commercial centre in Arabia. The Qur'ān mentions this in sura CVI; "For the covenants of security and safeguard (enjoyed) by the Quraysh. Their covenant (covering) journeys by winter and summer."<sup>2</sup>
3. The subsequent acquisition by Quraysh of political power and authority among other Arab tribes.<sup>3</sup> Abū Bakr is reported to have addressed the ansār in the following words: "The Arabs only follow Quraysh."<sup>4</sup>

The richness and purity of the Qurashī language and the political prestige of Quraysh are argued by some modern scholars to have lead to Qurashī Arabic becoming accepted at an early date as the standard literay language throughout Arabia.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Ṣāhibī, p.33, al-Raficī, Tārīkh Ādāb al-Arab, vol.I, p.85, 2nd ed. 1940.

2. Wāfī, Fiqh al-Lughah, p.109, Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī, pp.111-112.

3. ibid.

4. al-Bayān wa-al-Tabayīn, vol.IV, p.10.

5. Wāfī, Fiqh al-Lughah, pp.109-110.

This victory of Qurashī Arabic supposedly took place a considerable time before Islam so that it was the language of culture for all Arabs more than a century or one hundred and fifty years before the hijrah,<sup>1</sup> (i.e. from about 500 A.D.). Hence the Qur'ān was understandable to the Arabs irrespective of their different tribes.<sup>2</sup>

al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī asserts that the Arabic language has developed and passed through three stages in its development in fluency. In its first stage it was developed by a single tribe, then its development was taken up by all the tribes collectively, and finally Quraysh alone are to be credited with having brought it to its final and most important stage of development. He argues that Quraysh acquired this position because of their living in the vicinity of the ka<sup>C</sup>bah and meeting pilgrims, as a result of which they used to hear others and select the best of other tongues. al-Rāfi<sup>C</sup>ī finally concludes that it was almost miraculous that this development started a hundred or one hundred and fifty years before the hijrah.<sup>3</sup>

However, certain scholars object to the view that the Qur'ān has been revealed only in the lughah of Quraysh on the ground that there are many evidences showing features of various other dialects in the Qur'ān. For instance certain companions among Quraysh are

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1. Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.I, p.86.

2. Hasan <sup>C</sup>Awn, Dirāsāt Fī-al-Lughah wa-al-Nahw, p.58.

3. Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab Cairo, vol.I, pp.79-86 and 89-90.

reported not to have known the exact meaning of some Quranic words. Thus <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Abbās is reported to have said: "I used not to know the meaning of (the word fāṭir in) fāṭir al-samāwāt until I met two bedouin quarreling about a well. One of them said anā faṭartuhā, I began it (or started it)."<sup>1</sup> It is also attributed to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās himself that he said, "I used not to know the meaning of al-fattāh until I heard the daughter of Dhū Yazīn saying to an opponent of hers halumma fātiḥnī (come to arbitration with me) then I knew it."<sup>2</sup>

Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar both are reported not to have known the meaning of the word abb in (S.LXXX, 31) (wa-fākihātān wa-abbān).<sup>3</sup> In this connection reference may be made to a number of books and treatises composed by early scholars among which are Kitāb al-Lughāt Fī al-Qur'ān, being the version of Ibn Ḥasnūn on the authority of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās,<sup>4</sup> and Mā Warad Fī al-Qur'ān Min Lughāt al-Qabā'il by Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām.<sup>5</sup> In addition al-Nadīm states that al-Farrā', Abu Zayd, al-Aṣma<sup>C</sup>ī, al-Haytham b. <sup>C</sup>Adī, Muhammad b. Yahyā al-Qaṭī<sup>C</sup>ī and Ibn Durayd, composed books on Lughāt al-Qur'ān.<sup>6</sup> al-Dāwūdī in his Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn<sup>7</sup> mentions that Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Baṣrī has a

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1. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.314, Itqān, vol.II, p.4.

2. al-Mubarrid, al-Fāḍil, pp.113-114, Itqān, vol.II, p.5.

3. Itqān, vol.II, p.4.

4. Edited by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, 2nd ed., Beirut.

5. Published with Tafsīr al-Jalālayn, Cairo, 1342 A.H.

6. al-Fihrist, p.38.

7. Edited by <sup>C</sup>Alī Muḥammad <sup>C</sup>Umar, 1st ed., Cairo, 1392-1972, 2 vols.

book on Lughāt al-Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> This subject has been treated by al-Zarkashī and al-Suyūṭī, each of whom devotes a chapter to it.<sup>2</sup> al-Suyūṭī's chapter is based on the work of Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd. Furthermore there are many more examples showing the existence of grammatical features belonging to other dialects in the Qur'ān such as what is called Lughat Akalūnī al-Barāghith, for example in (S.XXI, 3) "Wa-Asarrū al-Najwā al-Ladhīn Zalamū" and (S.V, 71) "Thumma <sup>C</sup>Amū Wa-Ṣammū Kathīrun Minhum". This ancient semitic feature is found in the language of other Arab tribes, but Quraysh was free of it.<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Bāqillānī interprets the statement of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān about the revelation of the Qur'ān in the dialect of Quraysh as meaning that it was in this dialect in the main, but not entirely, on the grounds that features of other dialects exist in the Qur'ān and that the Quranic verse (S.XLIII, 3) "We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic" refers to all Arabs. In addition he states that whoever maintains that the Qur'ān has been revealed in any particular dialect should provide evidence for that. He argues if this were so other people would have said that it should be the tongue of Hāshim, since they are the nearest kinsmen of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup>

He quotes the statement attributed to the Prophet, "I am the most eloquent of you because I belong to Quraysh and was brought up

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1. ibid., vol.II, p.267.

2. al-Burhān fī-<sup>C</sup>Ulūm al-Qurān, vol.I, pp.291-296, Itqān, vol.II, pp.89-120.

3. Ramadhān <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Tawwāb, Fuṣūl Min Fiqh al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, 1st ed., Cairo, 1971, pp.81-82.

4. Nukat al-Intiṣār li-Naql al-Qur'ān, pp.385-386.

in Sa<sup>c</sup>d b. Bakr", and comments that that does not mean that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the language of Quraysh, because the Qur'ān could be revealed according to the most eloquent language of the Arabs and according to the language of those whose language is lesser in eloquence, since all varieties of Arabic used in the Qur'ān are eloquent. He accepts that most of the language of the Qur'ān belongs to Quraysh but states that of the different tribes who recited the Qur'ān before the Prophet the Banū Tamīm were the most fluent and clearest of all. This statement of Ibn al-Bāqillānī also asserts that the Prophet accepted the lughah i.e. dialect of Tamīm and that he used to read the Qur'ān in the language of Tamīm, Khuzā<sup>c</sup>ah and others.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Barr supports this view, pointing out that the dialects of other tribes exist in all Qirā'āt of the Qur'ān, such as the retention of hamz while Quraysh omits it.<sup>2</sup> Abū Shāmah quotes certain scholars as having said that the Qur'ān has been revealed not only in the tongue of Quraysh but in that of those of their neighbours who were fluent speakers, while the Arabs were allowed to read the Qur'ān according to their accustomed dialects.<sup>3</sup>

He elsewhere states that the Qur'ān includes all Arab dialects because its revelation was for them all and that they were permitted to read it according to their different dialects, thus the reading of

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1. Nukat al-Intiṣār, pp.386-387.

2. al-Burhān, vol.I, p.284, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.27, Ibn Kathir, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.22, Itqān, vol.II, p.103.

3. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.27, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.95.

Qur'ān differed. He adds that when the maṣāḥif were established these different readings were abandoned except for those whose luḡhāt, i.e. dialects, corresponded with the orthography of the maṣāḥif.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ibn Mālik the Qur'ān has been revealed in the dialect of Ḥijāz, except for a few features which are in accordance with the practice of Tamīm, such as idghām (assimilation), for example the following: (S.LIX, 4,4) "wa-man yushāqqi Allahā" for Qurashī yushāqiq which was not read thus by anyone and (S.II, 217) "wa-man yartadda minkum" for Qurashi yartadid.

This assimilation is originally a Tamimī feature and only occurs rarely, while the Ḥijāzī practice of separating the consonants occurs more frequently in the Qur'ān, e.g. "yartadid" (S.II, 217), "wa-al-yumlil" (S.II, 282), "yuhbibkum" (S.III, 31), "yumdidkum" (S.LXXI, 12), "yushāqiq" (S.IV, 115) and (S.VIII, 13), "yuhādīd" (S.IX, 63), "Fa-al-yumdid" (S.XXII, 15), "Wa-Ahlul" (XX, 27) "ishdud" (S.XX, 31) "yahlil" (S.XX, 81).<sup>2</sup>

The Ḥijāzī practice of separating the consonants is considered by Sībawayh as the best ancient Arabic.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibrāz al-Ma<sup>c</sup>āni, p.487.

2. al-Burhān, vol.I, pp.285-286, Itqān, vol.I, p.103.

3. al-Kitāb, vol.II, p.424.

Moreover it is agreed unanimously among all qurrā' to read Illā Ittibā<sup>C</sup> al-Zānni (S.IV, 157) with fath because this is in accordance with the Ḥijāzī tongue in which they use fath in this type of exception<sup>1</sup> [as opposed to Tamīm who use damm].

Sībawayh studied this type of exception in the section of his book entitled Hādhā bābun yukhtāru fīhi al-naṣbu li-anna al-ākhirā laysa min naw<sup>C</sup> al-'awwal wa-huwa Lughatu ahl al-ḥijāz as opposed to Tamīm who use damm.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise we find "Mā hadhā basharan" (S.XII, 31)<sup>3</sup> as opposed to Tamīmī "Mā hādhā basharun" although nobody recited this passage in the latter manner, according to Sībawayh, except among those who were not aware of how it was in the muṣḥaf.<sup>4</sup> He, however, opts for the Mā Tamīmiyyah in general on the grounds that it corresponds with analogy.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Jinnī (392/1001), states that mā in Tamīm usage is more analogical, but the Ḥijāzī is more in use. He prefers the Ḥijāzī because it is more in use and the Qur'ān has been revealed in this language.<sup>6</sup>

In addition the readings of the Qur'ān represent various dialects among them Ḥijāzī and Tamīmī, as "bi-rabwatin" (S.II, 265) with fath according to Tamīmī practice, being the reading of

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1. ibid.

2. al-Kitāb, vol.I, pp.363-365.

3. al-Burhān, vol.I, p.286, Itqān, vol.I, p.103.

4. al-Kitāb, vol.I, p.28.

5. ibid.

6. al-Khaṣā'is, vol.I, p.125.



Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir and <sup>C</sup>Āṣim, while "bi-rubwatin" with damm is attributed to Quraysh, being the reading of the rest of the ten qurrā'.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Jinnī regards the reading of (S. VII , 57) Nushuran as more fluent because it is the language of the people of Hijāz, while the Tamīmī version is Nushran.<sup>2</sup>

The Hijāzī Nushuran is the reading of Nāfi<sup>C</sup>, Ibn Kathīr, Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr, Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far and Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb and the Tamīmī is the reading only of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir.<sup>3</sup> Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr argues that the statement of <sup>C</sup>Umar to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd<sup>4</sup> indicates merely his own preference and does not mean that he forbade Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd's reading. He points out that since it is permitted to read the Qur'ān in seven ahruf there is no objection to choosing from within the seven ahruf.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Jinnī comments on this that the Arabs change hā' to ayn and vice versa because of their similarity in their place of articulation. He concludes that attā for hattā is permitted and it is not wrong but that the preference is for hattā because it is more in use.<sup>6</sup> Hammūdah supports this view, giving reference to certain sound readings attributed to Hudhayl which were accepted among the Qurrā', such as the reading of Hamzah and al-Kisā'ī in

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1. Hujjat al - Qirā'āt, p.146, al-Muhadhdhab Fi-al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr, vol.I, p.104.

2. al-Muhtasib, vol.I, p.255.

3. al-Muhadhdhab fi-al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr, vol.I, p.241.

4. See p.142 above.

5. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.27.

6. al-Muhtasib, vol.I, p.343.

which they read (S.III, 11) "fa-li-immihi" instead of "fa-li-unmihi".<sup>1</sup> This interpretation leads to the question of the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf which has been discussed in some detail in Chapter 1 above. Among the interpretations of the term ahruf mentioned there is that they refer to certain dialects of the Arabs. However scholars who support this interpretation have differed in their identification of the dialects involved. According to certain scholars all seven ahruf are included in the tongue of Mudar.<sup>2</sup> Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd attributes to certain unnamed scholars the view that these seven Mudari dialects are those of Quraysh, Kinānah, Asad, Hudhayl, Tamīm, Dabbah and Qays.<sup>3</sup> Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās is reported by some scholars to have identified these seven as Ka<sup>C</sup>b of Quraysh, i.e. Ka<sup>C</sup>b b. Lu'ayy and Ka<sup>C</sup>b of Khuzā<sup>C</sup>ah, i.e. Ka<sup>C</sup>b b. <sup>C</sup>Amr of Khuzā<sup>C</sup>ah. According to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās branches of Quraysh and of Khuzā<sup>C</sup>ah were neighbours.<sup>4</sup>

However, al-Kalbī attributes to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās the view that the ahruf are seven dialects, five of them belonging to the A<sup>C</sup>jāz of Hawāzin. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd identifies them as Sa<sup>C</sup>d b. Bakr, Jusham b. Bakr, Naṣr b. Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiyah and Thaqīf. He adds that they were called <sup>C</sup>Ulyā Hawāzin (Upper Hawazin) who were considered with Suflā Tamīm

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1. al-Qirā'āt Wa-'l-lahajāt, p.27.

2. Ibn Kathīr, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.22, Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.27.

3. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.101.

4. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.308, al-Ṭabarī, Tafsir, vol.I, p.66, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.93.

(Lower Tamīm), i.e. Banū-Dārim the most fluent of the Arabs according to ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlā'.<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that Abū ʿUbayd only identifies four of the five dialects belonging to the Aʿjāz of Hawāzin. However, according to Abū ʿUbayd Saʿd b. Bakr is the most fluent of all Arabs, for the saying is attributed to the Prophet "I am the most fluent of Arabs because I am Qurashī and brought up in Saʿd b. Bakr".<sup>2</sup> Abū Shāmah attributes to certain unnamed scholars the view that five of the seven dialects belong to Hawāzin and the remaining two to all the Arabs. In support of this view it is argued that the Prophet was brought up in Hawāzin and lived with Hudhayl.<sup>3</sup> According to another version Abū ʿUbayd is reported to have identified them as Quraysh, Hudhayl, Thaḳīf, Hawāzin, Kinānah, Tamīm and Yemen.<sup>4</sup> This view apparently widens the seven ahruf to include nearly all the Arab dialects.

Abū Shāmah and Ibn al-Jazarī attribute to certain unnamed scholars the view that they are Saʿd, Thaḳīf, Kinānah, Hudhayl and Quraysh, and that the remaining two are divided among the tongues of all the Arabs.<sup>5</sup> According to Abū Hātim al-Sijistānī they are Quraysh, Hudhayl, Tamīm, al-Azd, Rabīʿah, Hawāzin and Saʿd b. Bakr.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Abū ʿUbayd, Fadā'il al-Qur'ān, p.309.

2. ibid., al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.210.

3. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.96.

4. ibid., pp.99-100, al-Nashr, vol.I, p.24, Manāhil, vol.I, p.180.

5. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.100, al-Nashr, vol.I, p.24.

6. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.94, Itqān, vol.I, p.135.

According to al-Ṭabarī the language of the Qur'ān represents some dialects of the Arabs and not all of them because their tongues and languages were more than seven.<sup>1</sup> According to Ibn Qutaybah and Abū ʿAlī al-Ahwāzī, all seven ahruf are included within the tongue of Quraysh, in which the Qur'ān was exclusively revealed.<sup>2</sup>

Among those who accepted the existence of other dialects in the Qur'ān, views differed concerning the most eloquent of the best speakers of the Arabic language among all the Arabs. al-Mubarrid states that every Arab whose language has not been changed is fluent according to his people (tribe) and that the meaning of the statement Banū fulān afṣahu min banī fulān is that they are more similar in their language to the language of the Qur'ān, and the language of Quraysh, although the Qur'ān has been revealed in all the languages of the Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlā' is quoted in different versions as mentioning the most eloquent of Arabs as Upper Hawāzin and Lower Tamīm<sup>4</sup> or Upper Hawāzin and Upper Tamīm or Upper Hawāzin and Lower Qays or Upper Hawāzin and Lower Quraysh.<sup>5</sup> According to Abū ʿUbayd, however, Saʿd b. Bakr is the most fluent of all Arabs, because of

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1. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, pp.46-47.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.135.

3. al-Fāḍil, p.113.

4. Abū ʿUbayd, Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, p.309 and al-Fāḍil, p.113.

5. al-Fāḍil, p.113.

the statement attributed to the Prophet discussed above.

Quraysh was regarded as the most eloquent of all the Arabs according to Ibn Fāris<sup>1</sup>, al-Fārābī followed by al-Suyūṭī,<sup>2</sup> Ibn Khaldūn<sup>3</sup> and al-Rāfi'ī.<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Bāqillānī as mentioned opts for Quraysh as being the most eloquent of the Arabs, while mentioning the fluency and clearness of the language of Tamīm. al-Mubarrid in his al-Kāmil on the authority of al-Aṣma'ī, considers Jarm the most fluent of all Arabs.<sup>5</sup> Other sources refer to many other tribes such as Hudhayl and Thaḳīf as being the most eloquent.<sup>6</sup>

The most fluent of all the Arabs after Quraysh, however, according to al-Fārābī, are Qays, Tamīm and Asad, then Hudhayl and some parts of Kinānah and Ṭayyi'.<sup>7</sup> al-Rāfi'ī asserts that the most eloquent of all the Arabs are Quraysh, and after them immediately are Sa'd b. Bakr, Jusham b. Bakr, Naṣr b. Mu'āwiyah and Thaḳīf, then after them in fluency are Khuzā'ah, Hudhayl, Kinānah, Asad and Ḍabbah. They used to be neighbours of Makkah and come to visit it frequently and after them in fluency are Qays and other tribes of Central Arabia.<sup>8</sup>

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1. al-Ṣāhibī, p.52.

2. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.211.

3. Muqaddimah, p.635.

4. I'jāz al-Qur'ān, p.65.

5. al-Kāmil, vol.II, p.223.

6. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.211.

7. ibid.

8. I'jāz al-Qur'ān, p.65.

The number seven, however, according to al-Rāfī<sup>C</sup> is symbolic.<sup>1</sup>

In studying these views, we should consider the time factor as being an important reason for these differences as to who was most fluent, eloquent and clear in speaking, since the tribal societies in Arabia were influenced by mixing with non-Arab clients, who came to live in settled areas and came to influence nomadic regions later. The philologists are said to have refused to accept information from certain regions and tribes whose dialects were considered the most fluent of all Arabs, such as Thaḳīf, the people of Ṭā'if and the towns of Ḥijāz on the grounds that their language or their tongues were changed and distorted by the influence of foreign clients.<sup>2</sup>

This view of seven dialects with its all different versions has been refuted on the grounds that the Qur'ān includes in its text many words belonging to other Arab dialects, which have not been selected as one of the seven ahruf<sup>3</sup> and also that if the differences between them were dialectal <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām would not have been reported as having differed in reading, because both of them belonged to the same tribe of Quraysh.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī regarded as weak (da'īf) all traditions mentioning the seven lughāt on the basis of their isnād, since none of their narrators (such as Qatādah and al-Kalbī) is regarded as accepted in any chain.<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., pp.70-71

2. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.212.

3. Manāhil, vol.I, pp.180-181.

4. ibid., and al-Itqān, vol.I, p.136.

5. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.66.

Ibn al-Jazarī objects to interpreting ahruf to mean 'dialects' and states that what is meant by ahruf is not dialects but seven types of linguistic differences.<sup>1</sup> In support of this view Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī is reported to have said that there are forty dialects (lughāt) of the Arabs in the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> al-Suyūṭī identifies thirty two dialects, quoting examples of them in the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn al-Naqīb is reported to have said in his Tafsīr that the Qur'ān includes in itself all Arab dialects.<sup>4</sup> In support of this view Ayyūb al-Sikhīṭiyānī is reported to have said that the verse "We sent not an apostle except (to each) in the language of his own people" (S.XIV, 4) refers to all Arabs.<sup>5</sup> ʿAlī and Ibn ʿAbbās are also reported as having said that the Qur'ān has been revealed according to the dialects of all Arabs.<sup>6</sup> In the version of Ibn ʿAbbās it is stated that the Prophet used to teach people in one dialect, so they found difficulty and then he started teaching every tribe according to their dialects.<sup>7</sup>

Since however there are different features of various dialects of the Arabs in the text of the Qur'ān we shall next discuss the view commonly accepted today that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the common

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.24-26 and Chapter 4 above.

2. Itqān, vol.I, p.102.

3. ibid., pp.89-104.

4. ibid., p.168.

5. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.94.

6. ibid., p.96.

7. ibid., pp.96-97.

literary language, this being based on a certain dialect or dialects of the Arabs, whether specified or not.

In the following pages we shall be discussing views of modern and contemporary scholars whose arguments and analysis are based on modern methodology and linguistic evidences. However before embarking upon this discussion we shall briefly consider the hypothesis evolved by Vollers that classical Arabic was based on the speech of the bedouin in Najd and Yamāmah, but was much changed by the poets while in the rest of Arabia a quite different language, the ancestor of the modern Ḥadarī colloquial, was spoken. Vollers claims that the Qur'ān was composed in that popular Arabic and subsequently rewritten in classical style.<sup>1</sup> However, Vollers' theory has been abandoned as too extreme.<sup>2</sup> Rabin declares that his approach is extremely different from that of Vollers who "rejected the official text of the Koran as a grammarian's fabrication and sought its original form in the non-canonical variant readings. This reconstructed text he believed to be representative of 'a popular language', opposed to classical Arabic above all by its lack of cases and moods".<sup>3</sup>

He then, however, goes on to present a hypothesis of his own; "I accept the Othmanic text as a true presentation of the language Muhammad used, but believe that his literary diction

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1. Ancient West-Arabian, p.17.

2. Arbery, The Seven Odes, p.240.

3. Ancient West-Arabian, p.4.



contained some elements of the spoken idiom of his Milieu which happens to be a specimen of another lost language."<sup>1</sup> Vollers' view was rejected by R. Geyer and Nöldeke who rightly point out that there is no support for it either in the oldest traditions nor in the evidence of the Arabic itself.<sup>2</sup> In any case I<sup>C</sup>rāb is not found only in Arabic, but is an original Semitic feature, being found in Akkadian, Ethiopic, Babylonian, Hebrew, Nabatean and other Semitic languages.<sup>3</sup> In Nabatean particularly, as Nöldeke established, all cases of I<sup>C</sup>rāb, Dammah, Fathah and Kasrah are found.<sup>4</sup> In support of this we may quote the Harrān inscription which contains an accusative form, e.g. (Dhā al-Martūl).<sup>5</sup> In the text of the Qur'ān there are many examples whose meaning are impossible to understand without taking I<sup>C</sup>rāb into account, such as "Innamā Yakhshā Allāha Min <sup>C</sup>Ibādihi al-<sup>C</sup>Ulamā'u" (S.XXXV, 28), "Wa-idh ibtalā Ibrāhīma Rabbuhū" (S.II, 124), "Wa idhā ḥadara al-qismata ulū al-qurbā" (S.IV, 8) and "Anna Allāha barī'un min al-mushrikīna wa-rasūluhū" (S.IX, 3). Moreover the Qur'ān has been received in the manner of Tawātur with I<sup>C</sup>rāb in writing down and reciting.<sup>6</sup> The teaching of the Qur'ān was accordingly with I<sup>C</sup>rāb when it was read in prayers and taught to the

1. Ancient West-Arabian, p.4.

2. Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.276.

3. Bergsträsser, al-Taṭawwur al-Nahwī, p.75, Wolfensohn, Tārīkh al-Lughāt al-Sāmiyyah, p.157 and Johann Fück, al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.3. Enno Littman, Arabic Inscriptions, Leiden 1914, p.37.

4. Nöldeke, Die Semitischen Sprachen, Leipzig 1899, p.51 f.

5. al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-<sup>C</sup>Arab Qabī al-Islam, vol.VIII, p.549.

6. Wāfī, Fiqh al-Lughah, p.215.

students. The Qur'rā' did not differ in the I<sup>C</sup>rāb except in few cases which were due to the permission to read the Qur'ān according to the seven ahruf.<sup>1</sup>

The system of I<sup>C</sup>rāb in the Arabic language goes back to ancient times and what the grammarians introduced was simply a formulation of the rules governing its use with special reference to the language of the Qur'ān and of fluent speakers thus creating Arabic grammar as a science.<sup>2</sup> Alī Wāfī points out that the writing of the muṣḥaf which is received in the manner of tawātur, although free from vocalisation, supports the existence of I<sup>C</sup>rāb, e.g. the presence of Alif in the case of the nunated accusative such as Rasūlan, Bashīran and Shahīdan and I<sup>C</sup>rāb with Hurūf, e.g. al-Mu'minūn and al-Mu'minīn.<sup>3</sup> The Qur'ān refers to its language as "Perspicious Arabic tongue" (S.XXVI, 195) and "(it is) a Qur'ān in Arabic without any crookedness (therein)" (S.XXXIX, 28). This surely presupposes I<sup>C</sup>rāb to make things clear and understandable. The word I<sup>C</sup>rāb, however, in its earliest appearance in the Arabic lexicon means, "speaking clearly, speaking without incorrectness, without barbarousness, etc."<sup>4</sup> There are certain statements attributed to the Prophet and certain companions encouraging Muslims to read the

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1. See pp.21-22, above.

2. Wāfī, Fiḥ al-Lughah, p.215.

3. ibid.

4. Lane, An Arabic English Lexicon, Book I, Part 5, p.1492.

Qur'ān according to I<sup>C</sup>rāb.<sup>1</sup> al-Suyūṭī comments that what is meant by I<sup>C</sup>rāb in this context is no more than the knowledge of the meaning of the words. He objects to its interpretation as a grammatical term on the ground that Qirā'ah (recitation) without it is not considered or accepted in any case and there would be no reward without it.<sup>2</sup> In this connection Abū Bakr is reported to have said that "verily reading the Qur'ān with the manner of I<sup>C</sup>rāb is more beloved to me than just memorising certain verses".<sup>3</sup> This statement of Abū Bakr is, however, misunderstood by Paul Kahle who comments that seeking I<sup>C</sup>rāb and asking people to read the Qur'ān with I<sup>C</sup>rāb indicates that it used to be read without I<sup>C</sup>rāb, and that the I<sup>C</sup>rāb was found later and introduced to the text of the Qur'ān.<sup>4</sup> The word I<sup>C</sup>rāb in the statement of Abū Bakr if we accept its validity means clearness in reading the Qur'ān and it does not refer to grammatical terminology, as this meaning evolved after the introduction of Naḡḡ al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb by Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.<sup>5</sup> If, however, the Qur'ān used to be read without I<sup>C</sup>rāb this would have been mentioned in the oldest traditions and language sources.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore certain early

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1. al-Halālī, Risālah fī al-Tajwīd, f.156, Itqān, vol.II, p.3, Ibn al-Anbārī, Kitāb Īdāḡ al-Waqf Wa'l-Ibtidā', vol.I, pp.15-36.

2. Itqān, vol.II, p.3.

3. Ibn al-Anbārī, Īdāḡ, vol.I, pp.20 and 23.

4. Die Kairoer Geniza, London, 1947, pp.78-84.

5. al-Muḡkam, pp.3-7, al-Awā'il, vol.II, p.130 and p.107, Ch.3 above.

6. Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.276.

scholars are reported to have objected to Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb and Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>jām, but only on the grounds that it was not in accordance with the orthographical practice of the salaf; if the inflectional endings themselves had been in invention or innovation they would have protested against this also with much more vigour, whereas in fact there is no mention of such protest at all.

I<sup>C</sup>rāb in its grammatical sense, as Ibn Fāris states "distinguishes the meaning, and with the use of I<sup>C</sup>rāb we understand what the speakers meant".<sup>1</sup>

As al-Antākī remarks, it seems quite impossible that a group of grammarians could impose on Arabic these fabricated characteristics and force people to accept them and use them in such limited time without any resistance or rejection. In addition it may be pointed out that the idea of invention in the field of languages is not acceptable and that while languages are subject to evolution, this is a gradual process. In conclusion, therefore we may say that the language of the Qur'ān is a natural tongue in its development and it dates back with all its characteristics and qualities centuries before Islam.<sup>2</sup>

(To return to the main discussion, the differences between dialects spoken in the main part of Arabia (Hijāz, Najd and the Euphrates region), according to Nöldeke 'were small and the literary

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1. al-Ṣāhibī, p.76.

2. al-Wajīz fī Fiqh al-Lughah, pp.129-132.

language is based on all of them equally".<sup>1</sup> Classical Arabic according to Lyall is "a language of poetic convention of tribal wordstocks that had grown up with the absorption of the immense vocabulary of the Jahiliyya Qaṣīda and its great number of synonyms".<sup>2</sup>

However, classical Arabic according to Guidi is a mixture of dialects spoken in Najd and adjoining regions, but not identical with any one of them.<sup>3</sup>

Nallino maintains that the classical Arabic was based on a colloquial of the tribes of Ma<sup>C</sup>add which were united due to the rise of Kingdom of Kindah whose kings used to welcome poets and reward them generously. According to him this colloquial became the common literary language in the middle of the sixth century A.D. and dominated most parts of Arabian peninsula including Madīnah, Makkah and Ṭā'if in Hijāz.<sup>4</sup> Fischer and Hartmann held the view that classical Arabic was identical with one particular dialect but did not specify which.<sup>5</sup>

Brockelmann like Wetzstein and others before him claims that "classical Arabic was never spoken in the form in which we know it". He does not here discuss its relation to the dialects,<sup>6</sup> but he

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1. Ancient West-Arabian, p.17.

2. Sir Charles J. Lyall, al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt, vol.I, pp.xxv-xxvi.

3. Ancient West-Arabian, p.17.

4. Kayfa Nasha'at al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, Majallat al-Hilāl, vol.XXVI,I, October 1917, pp.41-48.

5. Ancient West-Arabian, p.17.

6. Ibid.

elsewhere regards the language of the Qur'ān as based on the dialect of Quraysh.<sup>1</sup> Bergsträsser in his "al-Tatawwur al-Nahwī Li'l-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah"<sup>2</sup> may be quoted in favour of what he calls Ḥijāzī dialect as he states that the orthography of the muṣḥaf was with accordance with Ḥijāzī dialect.<sup>3</sup> Wolfensohn argues that this common literary language is a mixture of many dialects and they became a united language after the disappearance of their speakers.<sup>4</sup>

Blachère maintains that the literary Arabic language is based on a native dialect, but he did not specify which one. He objects, however, to the Qurashī dialect as the native dialect on which the literary language was based.<sup>5</sup> Rabin offers what he calls the working hypothesis that "classical Arabic is based on one or several of the dialects of Najd, perhaps in archaic form".<sup>6</sup> The language of the Qur'ān, according to Beeston "is unmistakably that of the poetic corpus of the sixth century".<sup>7</sup> He, however, maintains that it was first written down in a form reflecting the pronunciation of the Western dialect of Makkah, and that the scholars succeeded in

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1. Fiqh al-Lughāt al-Sāmiyyah, p.30.

2. Published in Maṭba<sup>C</sup>at al-Sa<sup>C</sup>ādah, Cairo, 1929.

3. ibid., p.27.

4. Tārīkh al-Lughāt al-Sāmiyyah, p.166.

5. Tārīkh al-Adab al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, al <sup>C</sup>Asr al-Jāhili, p.77.

6. Ancient West-Arabian, p.3.

7. The Arabic Language Today, p.13.

introducing certain features characteristic of the eastern dialects, by only adding reading marks to it.<sup>1</sup>

Generally about the origin of classical Arabic, however, most western scholars agree in seeking its home among the bedouins of Najd. Some believe it to have been originally the language of one definite tribe, others a compromise between various dialects; others again think it acquired some purely artificial characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

However Wansbrough in his "Qur'anic Studies"<sup>3</sup> devotes a chapter to the "origin of classical Arabic"<sup>4</sup> in which unlike the others he rejects the concept of the literary Arabic language without offering any clear alternative. He asserts that very little can be known about the text of the Qur'ān or about classical Arabic prior to the "literary stabilisation of both in the third/ninth century. There is nothing, he maintains, in the Qur'anic usage of ʿarabī and its cognate form to support the suggestion of J. Fück (ʿArabiyya, Berlin 1905, 1-5) that ʿarabī in the expression "clear Arabic speech" refers to the ʿArabiyya the literary language of the Bedouins.<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., p.13.

2. C. Rabin, art. ʿArabiyya, EI<sup>2</sup> vol.I, p.565.

3. Oxford University Press, 1977.

4. ibid., pp.85-118.

5. A.T. Welch, art. al-Ḳur'ān, EI<sup>2</sup> vol.V, p.419.

Watt's final conclusion, however, appears to be that the language of the Qur'ān falls somewhere between the poetical Koine and the Meccan dialect. He also notes the omission of the hamzah or glottal stop, which is mentioned as a peculiarity of Meccan speech and has affected the orthography of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively he states that perhaps one might say that the Qur'ān was in a Meccan variant of the literary language.

This common literary language, however, according to certain contemporary Arab philologists, does not belong to any particular tribe, but it belongs to all Arab tribes because it has accepted elements from them all and thus it seems to be (like and) near to all of them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>C</sup>Ali Wāfī<sup>3</sup> accepts the view that the Qur'ān is revealed in the common literary language, but is opposed to western scholars in that he, like Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and others before him, asserts that this common language is based on the speech of Quraysh. In order to reconcile these two ideas he is obliged to postulate that the influence of Quraysh spread throughout Arabia well before Islam. He follows Vendryes in pointing out that the formation of a standard or common language is "due either to the extension of an organised political power, to the influence of a predominant social

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1. Introduction to the Qur'ān, p.84.

2. Tammām Ḥassān, al-Lughah Bayn al-Mi<sup>C</sup>yāriyyah Wa'l-Waṣfiyyah, pp.61-62.

3. Fiqh al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.111.



class or to the supremacy of a literature. Whatever may be its recognised origin, there are always political, social or economic reasons which contribute to its preservation",<sup>1</sup> and then argues that at least the second and third of these reasons apply to Quraysh. Their dominating dialect then became the language of art and written works of prose and poetry, and was the language of correspondence, conferences, and negotiations and the delegations' speeches and poems.<sup>2</sup> His arguments for this theory do not rest on any linguistic evidence, but are based on what he sees as the dominant cultural and economic position enjoyed by Makkah in the Jāhiliyyah period. <sup>C</sup>Alī Wāfī is followed and his arguments are used by most Arab scholars and researchers with certain additions or modifications.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, this common literary language in which pre-Islamic verse and prose was composed is, according to Hammūdah, the language in which the Qur'ān has been revealed, but he adds that the origin of this language is the 'Lahjah' dialect of Quraysh or what is called the Hijāzī dialect.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Anīs refer to the occasions of pilgrimage, general gatherings and cultural conferences before Islam which were factors for the unity of the

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1. Language, A Linguistic Introduction to History, p.261.

2. Fiqh al-lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, ' '.111-112.

3. Hammūdah, al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, Cairo 1948, Shāhīn, Fī<sup>C</sup>ilm al-lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Āmm, Cairo 1980, and Mahdī al-Makhzūmī, Madrasat al-Kūfah, Baghdad, 1955.

4. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.30.

Arabic language on the bases of the Qurashī dialect,<sup>1</sup> and he maintains elsewhere that the most eloquent manner of pausing in Qur'anic verses, which is dominant in the Qur'ān, is that of Quraysh and Hijāz.<sup>2</sup> He elsewhere, however, asserts that the language of the Qur'ān represents the common literary language of all Arabs and not only of Quraysh.<sup>3</sup>

The dialect of Quraysh, however, is argued to have contributed to the common literary language with many elements and features, to the extent that there might not be any exaggeration in attributing it generally to Quraysh or Hijāz, as the vast majority of scholars adopted this view.<sup>4</sup> But the Qur'ān contains many other elements and features which are known to have disagreed with that of people of Hijāz including Quraysh.<sup>5</sup>

al-Ghamrāwī who accepts the common literary language asserts that the only difference between Qurashī and other dialects is that the influence of common literary language on the dialect of Quraysh was so great due to their vicinity to the markets. He notably distinguishes between the literary language and the spoken language of Quraysh and postulates that both were influenced by the common literary language while this influence was as regards the other tribes mainly on the language of poems.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Fī al-Lahajāt al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.32.

2. Min Asrār al-Lughah, p.215.

3. Mustaqbal-al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.9.

4. Fuṣūl Min Fiqh al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.69.

5. ibid.

6. al-Naqd al-Tahlīlī, p.210.

However, there are certain objections raised against the view that the language of the Qur'ān is based on the dialect of Quraysh, which may be summarised as follows:

- a. The only reason for the Qurashī dialect to be favoured is a theological, rather than a linguistic, one, i.e. that they are the tribe of the Prophet.<sup>1</sup>
- b. The Mufasssirrūn used to quote other dialects and cite from poets belonging to other tribes to interpret the meaning of archaic words.
- c. The poets belonging to Quraysh were few in number.
- d. Reference is made by the philologists to bedouin dialects rather than the Qurashī one.
- e. The Sūq <sup>C</sup>Ukāz had only been established shortly before Islam.<sup>2</sup>
- f. Domination of certain non Qurashī features in the Qur'ān such as Hamz.<sup>3</sup>

These points were in turn refuted by the supporters of the view that the language of the Qur'ān is based on the dialect of Quraysh on the grounds that the Qur'ān certainly contains other dialect features which were to be interpreted with reference to their origins<sup>4</sup> but that it was the influence of non-Arabs on the tongue

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1. Nöldeke, Die Semitischen Sprachen, p.55.

2. Nallino, "Kayfa Nasha' at al-Lughah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah", Majallat al-Hilāl, vol.XXVI, I, October 1917, pp.41-48, El<sup>2</sup>, vol.I, p.565.

C. Rabin, art <sup>C</sup>Arabiyya.

3. <sup>C</sup>Abduh al-Rājihī, al-Lahajāt al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah fi'l Qirā'āt al-Qur'āniyyah, Cairo, 1968.

4. Shawqī Dayf, al-<sup>C</sup>Asr al-Jāhilī, pp.133-137, Nahlah, Lughat al-Qur'ān fī Juz' <sup>C</sup>Amma, pp.74-75.

of the people of Hijāz after the spread of Islām that led the philologists to seek the pure language in the areas which were not occupied by non-Arabs or where their numbers were very small.<sup>1</sup> As for the towns the purity of language (Faṣāḥah) had vanished after the first half of the second century A.H.<sup>2</sup> The philologists found during their researches that the tongue of Quraysh had become distorted,<sup>3</sup> but they continued collecting from bedouins and accepting their dialects until the middle or end of the fourth century A.H.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore <sup>C</sup>Ukāz had come into existence not shortly before Islām as claimed but at least one hundred years before.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion the Qur'ān refers to the language in which it has been revealed as an "Arabic without any crookedness (therein)" (S.XXXIX, 28) and a "perspicuous Arabic tongue" (S.XXVI, 195).

This <sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah referred to in the Qur'ān is neither Qurashī nor other, but the common literary language which was the medium between people of Hijāz, Najd and other regions of Arabian Peninsula. Thus the Qur'ān which is revealed in this language was understandable to them all, for example as when the Muhājirūn and

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1. Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddimah, p.635, Shawqī Dayf, al-<sup>C</sup>Asr al-Jāhilī, pp.136-137, al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-Naḥw al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, p.18.
  2. Khizānat al-Adab, vol.I, pp.5-6, Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, I, p.338.
  3. al-Muzhir, vol.I, p.211.
  4. Tārīkh Ādāb al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.I, pp.128 and 345, Ṭuruq Tanmiyat al-Alfāz, pp.11-12.
  5. Aswāq al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, pp.342-343, Lane, Lexicon, Int. p.VI.

Anṣār met in Madīnah communicated and understood each other. The delegations used to come to the Prophet from various parts of Arabia and the Prophet used to send teachers with them, so that apparently they found no difficulties in communicating or understanding the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

If the Qur'ān had not been revealed in this common literary language of all Arabs, it would have been very difficult for them to understand it or be influenced by its verses.

The impact of the Qur'ān on all Arab dialects was so great that it eventually had an overwhelming influence on all literary productions. This does not mean, however, that all dialectal features of Arabs did not exist any more. In support of this the text of the Qur'ān contains features of various Arab dialects.

Although the orthography of the maṣāḥif is said to be according to the dialect of Quraysh<sup>2</sup> the text of the Qur'ān still allows variant readings since permission was given to all Arabs to read the Qur'ān in varying ways according the seven ahruf. Thus in practice we find in sound accepted readings or canonical readings (Qirā'āt Mutawātirah) the existence of variant dialects; thus for example in (Lākinna) (S.XVIII, 38) and (Anā Uhyī) (S.II, 258) the

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1. Ibn Hishām, al-Sirah, vol.VII, pp.357-427, Ibn Sa<sup>C</sup>d, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, vol.I, pp.258-358, Shawqī, al-<sup>C</sup>Aṣr al Jāhilī, p.134 and al-Ghamrāwī, al-Naqd al-Taḥlīlī, pp.210-211.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479, Ibānah, p.33, al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, p.4, al-Taṭawwur al-Naḥwī, p.27, al-Munjid, p.22 and al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.114.

final ā is pronounced long in both continued speech and pausal form according to the reading of Abū Ja'far and Nāfi<sup>C</sup> of Madīnah being Tamīmī, while according to the other tribes and readings it is preserved only in the pausal form.<sup>1</sup>

Although the language of the Qur'ān represents selections from many Arab dialects, it might be argued to have been based mainly on the dialect of Quraysh and their eloquent neighbours in Hijāz and Najd, particularly Tamīm. In the variant canonical readings of the Qur'ān as discussed above we observe the existence of various Arab dialects as regards etymology, vocabulary, grammar and morphology and that Qurashī and Tamīmī are more frequent than other dialects, but the Qurashī or Hijāzi in general is more dominant.

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1. Abū Shāmah, Ibrāz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī, p.383, and al-Bannā, Ithāf Fudalā' al-Bashar, p.193.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE ORIGIN OF THE QIRĀ'ĀT

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The Prophet used to receive revelations of the Qur'ān in portions of verses and to teach them to his companions and recite them in his own prayers and in leading prayers before the companions.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection the Qur'ān addresses the Prophet "Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to make haste therewith. It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it: but when we have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated): nay more it is for us to explain it (and make it clear)" (S.LXXV, 16-19). The Qur'ān also states about its revelation in stages that "(It is) a Qur'ān which we have divided (into parts from time to time) in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: we have revealed it by stages" (S.XVII, 106).

Furthermore the Prophet used to ask certain companions to recite to him. In this connection it is attributed to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd that he was asked by the Prophet to recite from the Qur'ān before him and that he recited S.III, 1-41.<sup>2</sup> Ubayy b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b is also reported to have said that the Prophet asked him to recite to him and that he recited S.XCVIII.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Ch.2, pp. 64 and 67.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.87-88.

3. ibid., pp.456-457



The Muslims used to study and read the Qur'ān from the very early Makkan era. For example it is reported by Ibn Ishāq that when <sup>C</sup>Umar visited his sister and her husband he found them with their teacher Khabbāb b. al-Aḥatt reading and studying from a ṣahīfah suras XX and LXXXI.<sup>1</sup> It is attributed to the Prophet that whenever he received certain Qur'ānic verses, he used to teach them to his companions, the men first and then the women in a special circle for them.<sup>2</sup>

Certain learned Qurra' were directed by the Prophet when he was in Makkah before the Hijrah to teach the Qur'ān to the people in Madīnah. The first Qāri' was Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab b. <sup>C</sup>Umayr,<sup>3</sup> and he was followed by <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Umm Maktūm, <sup>C</sup>Ammār b. Yāsir and Bilāl.<sup>4</sup> In Madīnah, after the Hijrah, whenever individuals or delegations of newly converted Muslims came to the Prophet he used to appoint one of his learned companions to teach them the Qur'ān.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Prophet is reported to have sent Qurra' to certain places and tribes, particularly after conquering Makkah and in Makkah itself Mu<sup>C</sup>ādh b. Jabal was appointed to teach the people there the Qur'ān.<sup>6</sup> The number of the Qurra' who had committed the Qur'ān to memory was increasing gradually to the extent that at Bi'r Ma<sup>C</sup>ūnah alone in 5 A.H.

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1. Sīrat Ibn Ishāq, pp.161-162.

2. ibid., p.128.

3. Ghāyat al-Nihāyah, vol.II, p.299.

4. al-Zinjānī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.40.

5. Tartīb al-Musnad, vol.XVIII, p.9.

6. ibid.

seventy or forty of them were killed.<sup>1</sup>

Among the companions and their followers who settled in different conquered cities the number of Qurra' was quite considerable. Ibn Sa<sup>C</sup>d in his Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt counted hundreds of those who settled in Kūfah, Baṣrah, Shām etc., and their students who transmitted from them.<sup>2</sup> After the Prophet, his caliphs used to appoint prominent Qurra' to the cities. Three distinguished Qurra' were sent to the cities for example Abu al-Dardā' for Damascus, <sup>C</sup>Uḅadah b. al-Ṣāmit for Ḥimṣ and Mu<sup>C</sup>adh b. Jabal for Palestine.<sup>3</sup> <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd was appointed to teach the people of Kūfah,<sup>4</sup> and Abū Mūsā al-Ash<sup>C</sup>arī was sent to Baṣrah.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>C</sup>Uthmān, after his compilation of the maṣāḥif is reported to have appointed a Qāri' with each muṣḥaf he sent to the metropolitan cities (Amsār) to teach the people of his city according to it.<sup>6</sup>

Orthographical differences are reported between the maṣāḥif of the cities prepared by the command of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān. Certain scholars assert that this was in order that these variations should accommodate all authentic readings received from the Prophet according

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1. See pp.35-36 above.

2. al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol.VII, (pp.5-493).

3. ibid., vol.II, pp.356-357.

4. al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol.VI, pp.13-14.

5. Ibid., vol.II, p.345.

6. Manāḥil, vol.I, pp.403-404, Ma<sup>C</sup>al-Maṣāḥif, pp.90-91, and see p.48 above.

to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf. The variations which could not be allocated in one single muṣḥaf were divided between the maṣāḥif of the cities.<sup>1</sup> For example it is reported that in (S.II, 132) we find Wa-Awsā written in the maṣāḥif of Madīnah and Shām while in the rest of the maṣāḥif it is written Wa-Waṣṣā with the omission of Alif.<sup>2</sup> In addition it is agreed that the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif were free from Naqt both of al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb and al-I<sup>C</sup>jām, this also being in order to accommodate various dialects and readings which were permissible in reading the Qur'ān according to certain authorities, until the time came to use the Naqṭs of al-I<sup>C</sup>rāb and al-I<sup>C</sup>jām.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, followed by Ibn al-Jazarī, asserts that the maṣāḥif in the time of the companions were freed from Naqt for the following reasons:

- a. They were dependent on their memories rather than the maṣāḥif, bearing in mind that the transmission of the Qur'ān is with Tawātur. In addition the revelation of the Qur'ān was in portions to facilitate its memorisation. Thus they did not need to depend on a book as the people of the book did.
- b. There was no need for them, being Arabs, of Naqt because they used not to commit lahn.
- c. They wished to preserve the possibility of different readings such as Ya<sup>C</sup>malūna and Ta<sup>C</sup>malūna.

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1. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, pp.123-124, and al-Nashr, vol.I, p.33.

2. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.109.

3. al-Muhkam, p.2. See also Chapter 3 above, pp.106-109.

The introduction of Naqt took place during the lifetime of the followers when certain of them started using Naqt in their masāḥif with different colours due to the appearance of lahn at that time.<sup>1</sup>

As regards Naqt al-I<sup>C</sup>jām, it is argued that it has always been found with the alphabetic letters as it was difficult to distinguish between them without using it.<sup>2</sup>

Schools of reading in all the cities were established according to the Uthmanic masāḥif. Any reading which did not correspond with them was abandoned and the personal codices were destroyed by the command of Uthmān.<sup>3</sup> The masāḥif and readings of the amsār became famous and were adopted throughout the Muslim world. Hence all canonical readings are attributed to the Qurra' of the amsār, among whom are the following:

- a. In Madīnah, among the distinguished Qurra' were Mu<sup>C</sup>ādh al-Qārī, Sa<sup>C</sup>īd b. al-Musayyib, <sup>C</sup>Urwah b. al-Zubayr, <sup>C</sup>Umar b. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-<sup>C</sup>Aziz, <sup>C</sup>Atā' b. Yasār, Sālīm b. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh, Sulaymān b. Yasār, Muslim b. Jundub, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān b. Hurmuz, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and Zayd b. Aslam.
- b. In Makkah: <sup>C</sup>Ubayd b. <sup>C</sup>Umayr, <sup>C</sup>Atā', Ṭāwūs, Mujāhid, <sup>C</sup>Ikrimah and Ibn Abī Mulaykah.
- c. In Kūfah: <sup>C</sup>Alqamah, al-Aswad, Masrūq, <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah, <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Shurahbīl, al-Hārith b. Qays, al-Rabī<sup>C</sup> b. Khaytham, <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Maymūn, Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, Zarr b. Hubaysh, <sup>C</sup>Ubayd b. Fadīlah, Abū Zar<sup>C</sup>ah Ibn <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Jarīr, Ṣa<sup>C</sup>id b. Jubayr, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha<sup>C</sup>ī and al-Sha<sup>C</sup>bī.

1. Fatāwā, vol.XII, pp.100-101, al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.7-8 and al-Ibānah, p.68.

2. Subh al-A<sup>C</sup>shā, vol.III, p.151 and for detail see p.107, Chapter 3.

3. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479.

- d. In Baṣrah: <sup>C</sup>Āmir b. <sup>C</sup>Abd Qays, Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Āliyah, Abū Rajā', Naṣr b. <sup>C</sup>Āṣim, Yahyā b. Ya<sup>C</sup>mur, Mu<sup>C</sup>ādh, Jābir b. Zayd, al-Ḥasan, Ibn Sīrīn and Qatādah.
- e. In Shām: al-Mughīrah b. Abī Shihāb al-Makhzūmī, a pupil of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān and Khulayd b. Sa<sup>C</sup>d, a pupil of Abū al-Dardā'.<sup>1</sup>

The generation which followed these Qurrah was more specialised and certain scholars devoted themselves to teaching Qirā'āt. The people of their cities and students from different places migrated to learn from them. The readings were then attributed to them because they had taught Qirā'āt for a long time, because of their Ikhtiyār<sup>2</sup> in Qirā'ah and because people of their cities agreed on their Qirā'āt. These scholars are the following:

- a. In Madīnah: Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far Yazīd b. al-Qa<sup>C</sup>qā<sup>C</sup>, Shaybah b. Naṣāh and Nāfi<sup>C</sup> b. Abī Nu<sup>C</sup>aym.
- b. In Makkah: <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Kathīr, Humayd b. Qays al-A<sup>C</sup>raj and Muḥammad b. Ḥuṣayn.
- c. In Kūfah: Yahyā b. Waththāb, <sup>C</sup>Āṣim b. Abī al-Najūd, Sulaymān b. al-A<sup>C</sup>mash, Ḥamzah and al-Kisā'ī.
- d. In Baṣrah: <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Abī Ishāq, <sup>C</sup>Isā b. Abī <sup>C</sup>Umar, Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Alā', <sup>C</sup>Āṣim al-Juhdarī and Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb al-Ḥadramī.
- e. In Shām: <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Āmir, <sup>C</sup>Aṭiyyah b. Qays al-Kilābī, Ismā<sup>C</sup>īl b. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh al-Muhājir, Yahyā b. al-Ḥārith al-Dhimārī and Shurayh b. Yazīd al-Ḥadramī.<sup>3</sup>

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.8.

2. For an explanation of this term see p.220, Chapter 7.

3. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.8-9.

There had been no differences as regards readings reported between the companions in the Makkān era. The first time we notice this phenomenon is in Madīnah after the Hijrah during the lifetime of the Prophet. In this connection there are certain companions who were reported to have differed in reading certain ahruf of the Qur'ān and who came to the Prophet for arbitration. Everyone of them used to support his reading by stating that he had been taught it in that way from the Prophet himself. For example <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām were reported to have differed before the Prophet; each of them referred his reading to the Prophet, who asserted that the Qur'ān had been revealed in both ways.<sup>1</sup> These differences in readings continued even after the compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, although men were now ordered to read and teach the Qur'ān according to the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and the teaching of authorised Qurra'. Thus all readings which did not correspond with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif were rejected and regarded as shādhah.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Manzūr in his Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab adopts this view, quoting in support al-Azharī, Ibn Mujāhid, and Ibn al-Anbārī.<sup>3</sup>

al-Zajjāj is quoted as having said that it is not permissible to read any reading which does not correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif on the grounds that it is sunnah to follow

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1. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.482-483.

2. Munjid, pp.16-17, al-Nashr, vol.I, p.14, Laṭā'if, vol.I, p.64 and Itqān, vol.I, pp.213-214.

3. Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, vol.X, p.386.

them and read according to them.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī reports on the authority of ʿUmar and Zayd b. Thābit among the companions and of their followers Ibn al-Mukandir, ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī that they said that Qirā'ah is sunnah and that it is taught by the salaf to their descendents, and thus any reading should be according to it.<sup>2</sup>

This statement, according to al-Bayhaqī and Ismāʿīl al-Qāḍī, is to be interpreted to the effect that we should follow any reading of the salaf which is consistent with the ʿUthmanic maṣāḥif and that it is forbidden to disagree with the orthography of the maṣāḥif.<sup>3</sup>

#### The development of the conditions for accepted readings

The companions and their followers used to read the Qur'ān as they had been taught by the Prophet and by those who were authorised by him to teach others. The only condition for the authenticity and acceptability of a Qirā'ah was that it should be read in accordance with riwāyah, since whenever they differed in reading they used to refer it back to the riwāyah, stating that they had been taught it by the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> We also find the followers referring their readings to prominent Qurra' of the companions such as ʿUbayy b. Kaʿb,

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1. Ibrāz al-Maʿānī, p.397.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.17.

3. al-Ibānah, pp.69-73, Itqān, vol.I, p.211.

4. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.482.

<sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd and Zayd b. Thābit.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the scholars agreed unanimously that in transmitting the Q̣irā'ah it must be learnt directly from the Qārī' who was taught it according to an isnād traced back to the Prophet, on the grounds that this had been the practice with the Qur'ān, as the Prophet used to learn it from Gabriel and taught it to his companions accordingly.<sup>2</sup> After the compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān the Qurra' were all asked to read only according to the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif. For this reason the personal codices were collected and destroyed.<sup>3</sup> Eventually the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif dominated all the cities (amṣār) (with some slight resistance, for instance as in the case of Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd<sup>4</sup> and Ibn Shunbūdh<sup>5</sup>).

al-Qaṣṭallānī maintains that some people of innovation (Bid<sup>C</sup>ah) started reading the Qur'ān from the maṣāḥif without depending on riwāyah or transmission of isnād in order to support their theological views, such as the reading attributed to certain Mu<sup>C</sup>tazilites "Wa-kallama Allāha Mūsā taklīman" while the authentic reading is "Wa-kallama Allāhu Mūsā taklīman" (S.IV, 64). Another example of such an unauthentic reading was attributed to certain Shi<sup>C</sup>ites; "Wa-mā kuntu muttakhidha al-muḍillayn <sup>C</sup>adudan", to

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1. al-Ja<sup>C</sup>burī, Kanz al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī, fol.15.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, pp.481-483.

3. ibid., pp.485-486 and 482-483.

4. See p.42 of Chapter 2 above.

5. See p.195 below



interpret it as referring to Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar, while the authentic reading is "al-Muḍillīn" (S.XVIII, 51) with plural instead of dual.

He argues that in this way the scholars chose certain Qurṛā' from each city to which the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif were sent on the basis of authenticity, integrity, wide knowledge, long experience in teaching Qirā'āt, correspondence of their readings with the orthography of <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and the consensus of the people of their cities on accepting them.<sup>1</sup> al-Ṭabarī is quoted in his Kitāb al-Qirā'āt as having authenticated all readings provided that they corresponded with the orthography of <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif and were transmitted from the Prophet with authentic isnād.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Mujāhid introduces more conditions, considering in his evaluation of Qirā'ah the Qāri' himself rather than the Qirā'ah. According to his criteria the acceptability of a Qirā'ah requires the following conditions:

- a. The Qāri' should be perfect in his memorisation of the Qur'ān.
- b. He should have knowledge of different ways of I<sup>C</sup>rāb, Qirā'āt and Lughāt.
- c. He must rely on riwāyah (narration) and isnād.
- d. There must be consensus of the people of his city on his Qirā'ah.

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1. Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.66.

2. al-Ibānah, p.53.

Ibn Mujāhid (324/935) asserts that the seven Qurra' of Hijāz, Irāq and Shām whose readings he collected in his Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah were the descendants of the Tābi<sup>C</sup>ūn and that their Qirā'āt were accepted unanimously in their own cities and other neighbouring cities.<sup>1</sup>

In connection with the conditions for accepted readings a new development took place when Makkī b. Abī Tālib studied and classified them in his al-Ibānah considering in his evaluation the Qirā'ah itself rather than the Qurra'. According to him any Qirā'ah is acceptable if it agrees with the following three conditions:

- a. Its transmission from the Prophet should be authentic.
- b. It should be sound linguistically.
- c. Its orthography should agree with one of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī (543/1148) in his al-<sup>C</sup>Awāṣim Min al-Qawāṣim<sup>3</sup> attributes these three conditions to certain unnamed scholars and gives them approval.<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī adopts Makkī's conditions with slight modifications as follows:

1. Soundness of the isnād.
2. Consistency with the Arabic language in any of the ways of fluency, even if it is lesser in eloquence.
3. Agreement with the orthography of one of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, either directly, such as the reading Malik (S.I, 3), or indirectly, i.e. in a way which is consistent with the orthography, e.g. the reading Mālik.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, p.87.

2. al-Ibānah, pp.51, 90-91.

3. Edited by Tālibī, 2 vols.

4. ibid., vol.II, p.485.

5. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.9.

He elsewhere used to opt for the tawātur (successiveness of isnād) of Qirā'ah,<sup>1</sup> but changed this to soundness only on the grounds that if there is tawātur then there is no need to seek other conditions.<sup>2</sup>

The soundness of isnād here means that it should consist of more than āḥād (isolated reports) and that although it may not be mutawātir it should at least be mashhūr. This view is supported by Makkī, al-Baghawī, al-Sakhāwī, Abū Shāmah and Ibn al-Jazarī.<sup>3</sup> According to them a reading is acceptable when it comes through a sound mashhūr isnād which is supported by its fluency in Arabic and its agreement with the orthography of one of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. If one of these three conditions is not met the reading should not be accepted and it should be regarded as shādh.<sup>4</sup> In support of his views on the three conditions for accepted readings Ibn al-Jazarī quotes other scholars before him, Makkī, al-Dānī, al-Mahdawī, Abū Shāmah and al-Kawāshī and he adds that this is the view of all the salaf without exception.<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, Ibn Hajar al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī, al-Qaṣṭallānī and al-Suyūṭī opt for this, quoting many other named and unnamed scholars as having supported this view.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Munjid, p.15.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.13.

3. al-Ibānah, p.51, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, pp.145, 172 and al-Nashr, vol.I, p.13.

4. ibid.

5. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.9,44, and Itqān, vol.I, p.210.

6. Ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, al-<sup>C</sup>Awāṣim, vol.II, p.485, Fatḥ al-Bārī, vol. IX, p.32, Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.67 and Itqān, vol.I, p.225.

However according to al-Ja<sup>C</sup>burī the only condition for an accepted reading is the authenticity of its isnād which necessarily includes the other requirements of fluency and orthography,<sup>1</sup> while according to al-Hudhalī in his al-Kāmil all readings agreeing with the maṣāḥif are accepted provided that they are not in contradiction to the Ijmā<sup>C</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

According to al-Zurqānī the reason why certain scholars did not make tawātur obligatory in the conditions of the accepted readings is that since the Qur'ān is mutawātir, for the acceptability of a Qirā'ah the three conditions might be enough to give knowledge which is the same as mutawātir.<sup>3</sup>

al-Nuwayrī (897/1492) objects to the view discussed above which does not make tawātur obligatory, because according to him the majority of scholars like al-Ghazzālī, Ibn al-Hājib, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Atīyyah, al-Nawawī and al-Zarkashī all demand tawātur as a condition for the acceptability of a reading. In addition he states that the view which does not impose the condition of tawātur is an innovation and stands against the consensus of jurisprudents, Muḥaddithūn and others. Moreover he asserts that Makkī was the first one to differ and that he was followed by certain late scholars.<sup>4</sup> al-Bannā' al-Dimyātī following al-Nuwayrī asserts that Makkī was the

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.13 and Itqān, vol.I, p.211.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.37.

3. Manāhil al-<sup>C</sup>Irfān, vol.I, p.427.

4. al-Qawl al-Jādhidh li-man Qarā'a Bi-al-Shādhidh, <sup>and</sup> Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.70.

first one who did not impose the condition of tawātur for accepted readings.<sup>1</sup>

al-Ṣafāqisī (1118/1706) argues that according to Uṣūlīs, Fuqahā' and the Qurṛā' the tawātur is essential for the authenticity of a Qirā'ah. Accordingly a Qirā'ah cannot be authentic with only a sound chain even if it agrees with the orthography of the maṣāḥif and fluency in Arabic as was maintained by Makkī followed by Ibn al-Jazarī.<sup>2</sup> He adds that this madhhab of Makkī and Ibn al-Jazarī is not reliable because it does not differentiate between what is Qur'ān and what is not. Furthermore, according to him, differing versions given by the Qurṛā' do not affect the successiveness of a Qirā'ah, because it can be successive according to one group of Qurṛā' even if it is not according to all of them. According to him therefore shādh is what is not successive.<sup>3</sup>

Among jurisprudents the majority do not accept a Qirā'ah except with tawātur of its transmission. Only the Hanafites accept the shuhrah of an isnād.<sup>4</sup>

However, Ibn Miqdam (332/943) is reported to have used to read according to the two conditions of agreement with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and fluency in the Arabic language. This reading of Ibn Miqdam, because of its omission of the first condition of authenticity of

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1. Ithāf Fudalā'al-Bashar, p.6.

2. Ghayth al-Naf<sup>C</sup>, p.6.

3. ibid., p.7.

4. al-Zafzāf, al-Ta<sup>C</sup>rīf bi-al-Qur'ān wa-al-Ḥadīth, pp.54-55.

isnād was abandoned and rejected by the consensus of the scholars. He was questioned by leading scholars of his time and was forbidden to continue, after which he is reported to have repented and returned to the consensus of the scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Bāqillānī regards those readings which conflict with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif as having non-successive chains (Akhbār Āhād) and maintains that it is not permissible to read the Qur'ān except in successive transmission. He adds that it has been agreed among all the Muslims that it is not permissible to write or to read the Qur'ān according to these anomalous shādh readings.<sup>2</sup>

However all scholars, including Ibn al-Jazarī, regard any reading which omits the first condition of transmission as false and fabricated, and maintain that whoever reads accordingly intentionally is to be considered an unbeliever (kāfir).<sup>3</sup>

The orthographical differences between the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif are known from various works and books composed on the subject by early scholars who had seen the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and studied them. In this respect reference may be made to Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd's Fadā'il al-Qur'ān,<sup>4</sup> Ibn Mujaḥid's Kitāb al-Sabāḥ,<sup>5</sup> Dānī's al-Muqni<sup>C</sup> fī Rasm

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1. Nukat al-Intisār, p.60, Munjid, p.52, al-Nashr, vol.I, p.17 and Ghayat al-Nihayah, vol.II, pp.124-125.

2. Nukat al-Intisār, pp.101-102.

3. Munjid, p.17.

4. Edited by Jawharī, Makkah, 1398-1973.

5. Edited by Shawqī Dayf, Cairo, 1972.

Maṣāḥif al-Amsār<sup>1</sup> and al-Muḥkam Fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif<sup>2</sup> and al-Mahdawī's Hijā' Maṣāḥif al-Amsār.<sup>3</sup> In the anonymous Muqaddimat Kitāb al-Mabānī fī Nazm al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī<sup>4</sup> chapter five is devoted to the question of Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif.<sup>5</sup> Finally the older books of Tafsīr discuss these orthographical differences throughout the Qur'ān, for example the Jāmi<sup>C</sup> al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān of al-Ṭabarī,<sup>6</sup> Tafsīr al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī<sup>7</sup> and al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān of al-Qurṭubī.<sup>8</sup>

The condition of conformity with the orthography of one of the Uthmanic maṣāḥif for the acceptability of any Qurā'ah is agreed upon unanimously.<sup>9</sup> Thus Mālik b. Anas is reported to have said that anyone who reads according to personal codices not corresponding with the Uthmanic maṣāḥif should not lead prayer.<sup>10</sup> According to Ibn al-Jazarī, the Uthmānic maṣāḥif were written down according to the final revealed version, and the people of every city read according to their maṣāḥif, having been taught by companions who used

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1. Edited by Otto Pretzl, Istanbul, 1932.

2. Edited by <sup>C</sup>Izzat, Damascus, 1972.

3. Edited by M. Ramadān in Majallat Ma<sup>C</sup>had al-Makḥūṭāt al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyyah, vol.XIX Part I, 1973, pp.75-141.

4. Anon., published with the Muqaddimah of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Atiyyah in Muqaddimatān, ed. by Jeffery; Cairo, 1954.

5. Muqaddimatān, pp.117-133.

6. Published, in 18 vols, Cairo 1388/1968 and ed. Shākir (incomplete) in 16 vols, Cairo, 1347-89/1955-69.

7. Published, 4 vols, Beirut, 1366/1947.

8. Published, 20 vols in 10, Cairo, 1966.

9. al-Nawawī, al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Hamalat al-Qur'ān, pp.98-99.

10. Munjid, p.17.

themselves to read according to the teachings of the Prophet. The followers continued accordingly using the same method of the companions in teaching their students.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Shunbūdh, however, is reported to have read in certain ways differing from the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif. These differences were the same as those found in certain personal codices such as that of Ibn Masʿūd.<sup>2</sup> These readings of Ibn Shunbūdh were objected to by the consensus of the scholars of his time who met in Baghdad in 323 A.H. Under the chairmanship of Ibn Mujāhid and with the support of Ibn Muqlah the Abbasid wazīr sentenced him to be beaten and forbade him to continue.<sup>3</sup> Since no one is reported to have opposed this condition, agreement with the orthography of the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif was insisted upon, to the exclusion of the personal codices of certain companions and their followers which were reported to have differed in certain ahruf from the ʿUthmanic maṣāḥif.<sup>4</sup> Thus every reading which does not correspond to the orthography of the ʿUthmanic maṣāḥif was not accepted and was regarded as shādh even if its isnād was authentic and its language was sound.<sup>5</sup>

The final condition, of being consistent with fluent Arabic, is apparently because the Qur'ān has been revealed "In the perspicuous Arabic tongue" (S.XXVI, 195).

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.7-8.

2. al-Fihrist, pp.34-35, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.190.

3. al-Fihrist, p.34, al-Tibyān, p.99, al-Murshid al-Wajīz, pp.188-189 and Munjid, p.17.

4. For more information, see Chapter 4 above.

5. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.16-17.



As regards the degree of fluency in Arabic, there are arguments among the scholars. In this connection certain readings were objected to by some scholars on the grounds that they were not in accordance with the most fluent practice.<sup>1</sup> In conclusion, as Ibn al-Jazarī says, if a Qirā'ah is transmitted in an authentic isnād and corresponds with the orthography of one of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, then it is acceptable if its language is acceptable whether or not another reading may be more fluent.<sup>2</sup>

#### The kinds of readings

Views differed concerning the kinds of readings according to the conditions for accepted readings as discussed above. According to Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī the readings are classified into the following categories:

1. The accepted readings which agree with the three conditions.
2. The non-accepted readings which:
  - a. disagree with the orthography of <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif.  
(This kind is refused, he says, for two reasons, firstly, because it is āḥād (isolated reports) which is not acceptable in the Qur'ān, and secondly, it contradicts the consensus.)
  - b. do not have authentic transmission.

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1. This will be treated in detail in the following chapter, pp.249f.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.15.

- c. even though their transmission is sound although not mutawātir and corresponds with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic masāḥif, do not conform with the Arabic language.<sup>1</sup> Makkī does not give examples for the sake of brevity.

However, Ibn al-Jazarī, after quoting Makkī, provides examples for each kind according to Makkī's classification as follows:

1. Examples of the first kind are the two ways of reading Malik and Mālik, (1,4).
2. The examples of the second kind are as follows:
  - a. The reading attributed to Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd "Wa-al-~~dh~~akara wa-'l-unthā" which is in the mushaf with addition of "Mā Khalāqa" as "Wa-mā khalāqa ~~al~~-~~dh~~akara wa-al-unthā" (XCII, 3).
  - b. The reading attributed to Ibn al-Sumayfī<sup>C</sup> and Abū al-Simāl "Nunahhika bi-badanika li-takūna li-man khalafaka āyah" while the authentic reading is "Nu<sup>h</sup>najjika bi-badanika li-takūna li-man khalfaka āyah".
  - c. The reading attributed to Zayd and Abū Hātim on the authority of Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb "Adriya ~~a~~-qarībun" which should be read as "Adri<sup>a</sup>-qarībun" without fath. This last kind, however, is rare or non-existent according to Ibn al-Jazarī, and he only quotes this here to give an example.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī divides the readings as regards their authenticity into:

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1. al-Ibānah, pp.51-52.
  2. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.14-16.

- a. The authentic readings which are consistent with all three conditions required for the accepted reading.
- b. Non-authentic readings which do not meet one of the conditions.<sup>1</sup>

He elsewhere divides them into three different categories, the first being the famous (Mashhūr) which is accepted by all people such as the readings of the accepted narrators and certain reliable books of Qirā'āt. An example of the ways in which Mashhūr readings vary among themselves is in their treatment of madd (prolongation).

According to Ibn al-Jazarī the variations in madd go back to the seven ahruf revealed to the Prophet, as do all the variations in accepted readings, which all have the status of successive readings (Qirā'āt Mutawātirah)<sup>2</sup> He interprets mutawātir as that which is transmitted by a group of people (without a fixed number of narrators), narrating on the authority of another group to the end of the chain. He adds that mutawātir, thus defined, gives knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The second category is that which is not accepted by the people and is not famous (Mashhūr).<sup>4</sup> The third category is that which has a sound chain and is consistent with Arabic, but does not correspond with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. This category is called shādh because it differs from the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.15.

2. Munjid, pp.16-17.

3. ibid., p.15.

4. ibid, pp.16-17.

5. Munjid, pp.16-17.

al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī divides the readings into three categories as follows:

- a. The readings which correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, but are transmitted with strange isnāds. He regards these as the same as the above.
- b. The readings which differ from or do not correspond with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. He says that this kind is not regarded as Qur'ān.
- c. The readings which correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and are transmitted in mashhūr isnāds and accepted by the scholars generation after generation. This kind of reading is according to him acceptable, and he gives the readings of Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb and Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far as an example.<sup>1</sup>

al-Qaṣṭallānī classifies readings into the following categories:

- a. The readings which are agreed to be successive readings.
- b. The readings about whose successiveness there is a difference of opinion.
- c. The readings which are agreed to be anomalous (shādh).<sup>2</sup>

According to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (824/1421) the readings are divided into three categories:

1. Mutawātir: which are the seven prominent readings.
2. Āḥād: being the readings of the three Qurra' completing the then. In addition the readings attributed to the companions are regarded as the same as Āḥād.

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.IX, p.32.

2. Latā'if, vol.I, p.170.

3. Shādh: being the readings of the followers such as al-A<sup>C</sup>mash, Yahyā b. Waththāb and Ibn Jubayr and their like.<sup>1</sup>

al-Suyūṭī quoting with approval Ibn al-Jazarī objects to this view of al-Bulqīnī on the grounds that acceptability of a Qirā'ah should be subject only to the three conditions for an accepted reading.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, al-Suyūṭī classifies the kinds of reading as regards their acceptability in greater detail, giving an exact definition of each kind as follows:

1. al-Mutawātir, which is narrated by a group on the authority of another to the end of chain, and for whom it would be impossible that they should agree on something false. The example of this kind is what all narrators on the authority of the seven readers agree upon transmitting from them. The greater part of all readings is in this category.
2. al-Mashhūr, which is narrated with a sound chain, but is not mutawātir, with the condition that it should correspond to one of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, and be consistent with the Arabic language. An example of this is where the readings of the seven Qurra' vary. He asserts that only these kinds are permissible in reading the Qur'ān and that they should be accepted without any doubt.
3. al-Āḥād, which are narrated with a sound isnād but are not consistent with the Arabic language or the orthography of the maṣāḥif. Readings of this kind are āḥād even if their isnād is mashhūr. This kind is not accepted and

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1. Itqān, vol.I, p.210.

2. ibid.

it is not permissible to read the Qur'ān according to it. An example of this is found in the al-Mustadrak of al-Hākim who reports on the authority of the Prophet the reading (rafārif) which is found in the muṣḥaf as (raḥraf), and the reading (Qurṛāt) which in the muṣḥaf is (Qurrat) (S.XXXII, 17).

4. al-Shādhdh, that which has no sound chain, for example the reading of (Malaka) and (Yu<sup>C</sup>badu) which according to accepted readings are (Maliki) and (Na<sup>C</sup>budu) (S.I, 4-5).
5. al-Mawḍū<sup>C</sup>, that which has no origin or is fabricated such as the readings compiled by al-Khuzā<sup>C</sup>ī which were attributed to Abū Hanīfah, e.g. (Yakhshā Allāhu Min <sup>C</sup>Ibādiḥī al-<sup>C</sup>Ulamā'a) where the authentic reading is (Yakhshā Allāha min <sup>C</sup>ibādiḥī al-<sup>C</sup>ulamā'u) (S.XXXV,28)
6. al-Mudraj, which is similar to al-Hadīth al-Mudraj, i.e. what is added to the text of the Qur'ān as tafsīr, e.g. the reading attributed to Sa<sup>C</sup>d b. Abī Waqqās, with the addition of Min Umm after Wa-Lahū Akhun Aw Ukhtun (S.IV, 12 ) and the reading attributed to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās with the addition of Fi Mawāsim al-Hajj to Laysa <sup>C</sup>Alaykum Junāḥun An Tabtaghū Fadlan Min Rabbikum) (S.II, 197 ).<sup>1</sup>

#### The successive and anomalous readings

The views of the scholars agree upon the successiveness of the seven distinguished readings of the amsār which were compiled by Ibn Mujāhid in his Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah. Thus they were accepted and

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1. Itqān, vol.I, pp.215-216.

canonised by the consensus of the scholars with their fourteen versions.<sup>1</sup> Many books were composed by prominent philologists in support of al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah in their phonetical aspects and linguistic features.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Mujāhid himself regards other readings than his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah as shādhah and his view was adopted by a group of scholars,<sup>3</sup> although certain others, while they agree with Ibn Mujāhid on the successiveness of his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, add to them the three readings of Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far, Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb and Khalaf. Thus according to this view the successive readings are ten.<sup>4</sup> In this connection many books were composed on the readings of eight, nine or ten Qurra', adding one or more to the list of Ibn Mujāhid.<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī adopts this view and supports it most strongly and states that the ten readings have been accepted by the salaf and their descendants, for there is no objection reported from them. Thus according to Ibn al-Jazarī the ten readings were accepted by the people unanimously. He studies the chains (asānīd) of the three additional readings to prove that they have the same status as the seven successive readings.<sup>6</sup> In support of his view he quotes Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Ḥayyān to the

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1. Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.1, p.170, and al-Bahr, vol.II, p.324.

2. Abū <sup>C</sup>Alī al-Fārisī, al-Hujjah, edited by al-Najdī and others 1st ed., Cairo 1966. — Ibn Khālawayh, al-Hujjah, edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed., Beirut 1977.

3. Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddimah, p.479.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.38-43, Munjid, pp.15-16.

5. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.43 and pp.58-98.

effect that the seven readings are different from the seven ahruf and were introduced for the first time by Ibn Mujāhid in the fourth century, while before him the ten readings were known in the amsār and accepted by the people. In addition, according to them the ten readings are successive, but if there are certain people who do not know them all, they should not reject what they do not know.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Ibn al-Jazarī lists the names of prominent Qurra' or some of them from the time of Ibn Mujāhid in the fourth century until the time of Ibn al-Jazarī himself in the ninth century.<sup>2</sup> In conclusion he asserts that the ten readings are equally successive without exception.<sup>3</sup>

Finally he devotes chapter five of his Munjid al-Muqri'in to quotations from scholars supporting his view, referring to al-Baghawī, Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Ja<sup>c</sup>burī.<sup>4</sup>

According to Ibn al-Hājib the seven readings are successive except in certain ways of pronunciation like the madd and imālah.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Khaldūn opts for this view, approving the successiveness of only the seven readings.<sup>6</sup> This view was rejected among the scholars on grounds that the seven readings were transmitted from the salaf with

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1. ibid., pp.28-29, c.f. Fatāwā, vol.XIII, pp.390-394.

2. Munjid, pp.29-45.

3. ibid., pp.45-46.

4. ibid., pp.46-49.

5. Munjid, p.57.

6. Muqaddimah, p.479.



all their asānīd, orthography, linguistic aspects including phonetics and ways of pronunciation. As regards the madd for example the Qurra' agreed unanimously on the existence of prolongation, but differed only concerning the degree of madd.<sup>1</sup>

Abū Shāmah regards the seven readings as successive when they agree with each other. Thus when they differ they are not successive.<sup>2</sup> However, Ibn al-Jazarī objects to this view as contradicting to the view of the majority. In support of this view he states that each one of the seven readings were transmitted in successive chains and that what Ibn Mujāhid had done was only to select two ruwāt each from among many.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, according to Ibn al-Jazarī the ten readings are all successive in agreeing or disagreeing with each other and concerning all their aspects.<sup>4</sup>

In support of the ten readings many books are written. The first author known to us as having composed a book on them is al-Khuzā<sup>c</sup>ī (d.408/1017) al-Muntahā fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>c</sup>Ashr.<sup>5</sup> He was followed by Abū <sup>Ṣ</sup>Alī al-Mālikī (d.438/1046) Kitāb al-Rawḍah fī al-Qirā'āt al-Ihdā <sup>c</sup>Asharah, being the ten readings and the reading of

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1. Munjid, pp. 57 - 62, and Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, pp.78-79.

2. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.177, and Munjid, p.63.

3. Munjid, pp.62-67.

4. ibid., p.54.

5. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.93, and Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.86.

al-A<sup>C</sup>mash.<sup>1</sup> Abū Naṣr al-Baghdadī (d.442/1050) al-Mufīd Fī al-Qirā'āt  
al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>2</sup> Ibn Shīṭā (d.443/1051) al-Tidhkār Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>3</sup>  
 Ibn Fāris (d.450/1058) al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>4</sup> Abū al-  
 Ḥasan al-Fārisī (d.461/1068) Kitāb al-Jāmi<sup>C</sup> Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>5</sup>  
 Ibn Jubārah al-Maghribī (d.465/1072) al-Kāmil Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr  
wa-al-Arba<sup>C</sup>ah al-Zā'idah <sup>C</sup>Alayha,<sup>6</sup> Ibn Suwār (d.496/1102) Kitāb al-  
Mustanīr Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>7</sup> Abū 'Alī al-Khayyāt, (d.499 /1106)  
Kitāb al-Muhadhdhab Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>8</sup> Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Izz al-Qalānisī  
 al-Wāsiṭī (d.521/1127), Kitāb Irshād al-Mubtadi' Watadhkirat al-  
Muntahī Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>9</sup> Ibn Khayrūn (d.539/1144) Kitāb al-  
Mūḍiḥ Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr and al-Miftāḥ Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>10</sup>  
 al-Shahrazūrī (d.550/1155) Kitāb al-Miṣbāḥ Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr.<sup>11</sup>  
 al-Wāsiṭī (d.740/1339) al-Kanz Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr and al-Kifā  
yah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Jundī (d.769/1367) Kitāb al-  
Bustān Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>13</sup> Sibṭ al-Khayyāt (d. 541/1146).

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.74.
  2. ibid.
  3. ibid., p.84.
  4. ibid.
  5. ibid., p.75.
  6. ibid., p.91.
  7. ibid., p.82.
  8. ibid., p.84.
  9. ibid., p.86.
  10. ibid.
  11. ibid., p.93.
  12. ibid., p.94.
  13. ibid., p.97.

Irādat al-Tālib Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>1</sup> Abū Naṣr Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad al-<sup>C</sup>Irāqī (d. after 420/1029) al-Ishārah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī (d.833/1429) al-Nashr Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>3</sup> Taqrīb al-Nashr Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr,<sup>4</sup> Tahbīr al-Taysīr fī Qirā'āt al-A'imma al-<sup>C</sup>Asharah,<sup>5</sup> and Tayyibat al-Nashr Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr.<sup>6</sup>

We also find on eight readings books composed by Ibn Ghalbūn (d.399/1008) al-Tadhkirah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Thamān,<sup>7</sup> Abū Ma<sup>C</sup>shar (d.448/1056) Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Thamān,<sup>8</sup> Abū <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī (d.560/1164) Kitāb al-Mufīd Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Thamān being an abridgement of Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ of Abū Ma<sup>C</sup>shar (mentioned above)<sup>9</sup> and Sibṭ al-Khayyāt (d.541/1146) al-Mubhij Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Thamān adding to them the readings of Ibn Muḥayṣin, al-A<sup>C</sup>mash, Khalaf and al-Yazīdī.<sup>10</sup>

Finally we find certain scholars who devoted their books to the readings of the three additional Qurra' or only one of them, for example the books of al-Dānī (d.444/1052) Mufradat Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb,<sup>11</sup>

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.84.

2. ibid., p.93.

3. Edited by al-Ḍabbā<sup>C</sup>, 2 vols, Beirut (n.d.).

4. Edited by Ibrāhīm <sup>C</sup>Atwah <sup>C</sup>Awad, 1st ed., 1381-1961, Cairo.

5. Edited by al-Qādī and Qamḥawī, Cairo, 1st ed., 1393-1973.

6. Ed. al-Ḍabbā<sup>C</sup>, included in Ithaf al-Bararah bi-al-Mutūn al-<sup>C</sup>Asharah, Cairo, 1354/1935.

7. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.73.

8. ibid., p.77.

9. ibid., p.93.

10. ibid., p.83.

11. ibid., p.60.

Ibn al-Fahhām (d.516/1122) Mufradat Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb,<sup>1</sup> and Abū Muḥammad al-Sa<sup>C</sup>īdi (died after 650/1252) Mufradat Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb,<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī (d.833/1429) al-Durrah al-Mutammimah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr being the readings of Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far, Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb and Khalaf. Sharḥ al-Samnūdī <sup>C</sup>Alā Matn al-Durrah al-Mutammimah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-<sup>C</sup>Ashr.<sup>4</sup>

### Definition of shādhdh

According to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, followed by Abū Shāmah and Ibn al-Jazarī, shādhdh is the reading which has been narrated as Qur'ān without a successive transmission or at least a famous (mashhūr) transmission accepted by the people. He refers to the material contained in the book of Ibn Jinnī called al-Muḥtasib fī Tabyīn Wujūh Shawādhdh al-Qirā'āt Wa-al-īdāḥ <sup>C</sup>Anhā<sup>5</sup> as an example of this kind.<sup>6</sup>

According to Makkī and Ibn al-Jazarī, shādhdh is the reading which contradicts the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif or the Arabic although it might be authentic in its chain. Alternatively it has been transmitted in an unauthentic chain although it corresponds with the orthography and fluent Arabic.

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.75-77.

2. ibid., p.98.

3. Edited by al-Qādī and Qamḥawī, 1st ed., 1393-1973, Cairo, Aleppo.

4. Edited by al-Ḍabbā<sup>C</sup>, Cairo, (n.d.).

5. Edited by Nāṣif and others, 2 vols., Cairo, 1386-89/1966-69.

6. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.184 and Munjid, p.18.

Alternatively again it corresponds with the three conditions, but it is not famous (mashhūr) and was not accepted by the people.<sup>1</sup> However, according to the majority of scholars shādhdh is the reading which is not transmitted in a successive manner.<sup>2</sup>

Thus al-Qaṣṭallānī states that shādhdh is not regarded as Qur'ān because it lacks the condition of tawātur. In support of his view he quotes Uṣūlīs, Fuqahā' and other scholars, referring to al-Ghazzālī, Ibn al-Hājib, al-Qāḍī <sup>C</sup>Adud al-Din, al-Nawawī and al-Sakhāwī and the majority of scholars as objecting to shādhdh readings.<sup>3</sup>

al-Nawawī is reported to have said that it is not permitted to read shādhdh in or outside prayers. Moreover Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr is reported to have stated that the scholars agreed unanimously in rejecting shādhdh readings.<sup>4</sup> al-Qaṣṭallānī refers to al-Adhru<sup>C</sup>ī, al-Zarkashī, al-Asnawī, al-Nasā'ī al-Tirmidhī and al-<sup>C</sup>Asqalānī as having forbidden reading with shādhdh.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore al-Sakhāwī is quoted by his pupil Abū Shāmah with his approval as having said that it is forbidden to read the Qur'ān with shādhdh readings, because they contradict the consensus of the Muslims and the tawātur.<sup>6</sup>

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1. al-Qirā'āt al-Shādhdhah, p.10. See 197 above.

2. ibid.

3. Latā'if al-Ishārat, vol.I, pp.72-73.

4. ibid., p.73.

5. ibid., p.74.

6. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, pp.181-182.

As regards use of the anomalous readings al-Ṣafāqisī quotes al-Nuwayrī as having allowed the use of shādhdh in the interpretation of the Qur'ān for linguistic purposes and also its use as a source to substantiate arguments in Islamic law, although this is only according to a certain group of jurists, since the majority of scholars disagree with this opinion. According to al-Nuwayrī the earlier scholars who were reported to have read with shādhdh must have read it only for the two purposes mentioned above, but never as Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

How does one distinguish shādhdh? Ibn al-Jazarī answering this question states that the books composed on Qirā'āt are divided into two categories according to their authors:

- a. Those who compiled the accepted readings and whose readings the people agree with unanimously, like the two books entitled al-Ghāyah of Ibn Mahrān and al-Hamadānī, Ibn Mujāhid, al-Sabāh, al-Qalānisī, Irshād al-Mubtadi', al-Dānī, al-Taysīr, al-Ahwāzī, Mūjaz, Makkī, al-Tabṣīrah, Ibn Shurayḥ, al-Kāfī, Abū Ma<sup>C</sup>shar al-Ṭabarī, al-Talkhīṣ, al-Ṣafrāwī, al-I<sup>C</sup>lān, Ibn al-Faḥḥām, al-Tajrīd and al-Shāṭibī, Hirz al-Amānī.
- b. Those who compiled books or readings which they received irrespective of their successiveness or anomalousness, like the books of Sibṭ al-Khayyāt, Abū Ma<sup>C</sup>shar, al-Hudhalī, Shanḥazūrī, Abū 'Alī al-Mālikī, Ibn Fāris and Abū 'Alī al-Ahwāzī.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ghayth al-Naf<sup>C</sup>, p.7.

2. Munjid, pp.18-19.

Ibn al-Jazarī elsewhere attributes to certain unnamed scholars the practice of accepting shādhdh readings which were attributed to the personal codices of some companions and their followers. He states that the majority of scholars object to the shādhdh readings on the grounds that they are not mutawātir and that even if they used to be authentic in transmission they are now abrogated by the final revised version or by the consensus of the companions on the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif; or they had not been transmitted as mutawātir; or they might not have been from the seven ahruf.<sup>1</sup>

#### Development of the concept of shādhdh

After the compilation of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, the readings differing from the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic ones were regarded as shādhdh. Thus it was made an obligatory condition for the authenticity of any reading, that it should correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and accordingly the readings contradicting the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif were abandoned and destroyed.

The first development was that Ibn Mujāhid after introducing his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, regarded the other readings rather than his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah as shādhdh. In this stage Ibn Jinnī composed his book al-Muhtasib and Ibn Khālawayh wrote his two books al-Badī<sup>C</sup> and al-Mukhtasar. They both regarded the other readings over the

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.14-15.

seven readings compiled by Ibn Mujāhid as shādhdh. Ibn Jinnī regards shādhdh as the readings which were not included in Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah of Ibn Mujāhid.<sup>1</sup> He attributes to the people of his time the description of them as shādhdh.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly thus what is meant by shādhdh here does not necessarily mean that it is linguistically anomalous or Lughah Shādhdhah.<sup>3</sup>

The next step was the introduction of the three conditions for the accepted readings as a result of which any reading missing one of the three conditions is regarded as shādhdh. This had the effect of accommodating the other three readings while four readings over the ten readings were finally regarded as shādhdh. These four anomalous readings are as follows:

<u>The Qāri'</u>	<u>His district</u>	<u>1st Rāwī</u>	<u>2nd Rāwī</u>
1. al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.21/614)	Baṣrah	Shujā <sup>C</sup> (190/805)	al-Dūrī (246/860)
2. Ibn Muḥayṣin (d.123/740)	Makkah	al-Bazzī (250/864)	Ibn Shunbūdh (328/939)
3. al-A <sup>C</sup> mash (d.148/765)	Kūfah	al-Shunbūdhī (388/998)	al-Muṭawwi <sup>C</sup> ī (371/981)
4. Yahyā al-Yazīdī (d.202/817)	Baghdād	Sulaymān b. al-Hakam (235/849)	Aḥmad b. Farah (303/915) <sup>4</sup>

1. al-Muḥtasib, vol.I, p.32.

2. ibid., pp.32-33.

3. ibid.

4. al-Qirā'āt al-Shādhdhah



These four readings are included in the work of al-Bannā' al-Dimyātī, Ithāf Fudalā' al-Bashar bi-al-Qirā'āt al-Arba<sup>C</sup>ata<sup>C</sup> Ashar.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between the Qirā'āt and the Qur'ān

al-Zarkashī followed by al-Qastallānī and al-Bannā' differentiates between the Qur'ān and the Qirā'āt. According to him the Qur'ān is the revelation miraculously revealed to the Prophet while the Qirā'āt are the orthographical, phonetical and linguistical differences in the variations of readings of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

In fact there is no major difference between the authentic reading and the Qur'ān and that the relation between them is that of the part to the whole.

However, although there is an overlapping and close connection between the Qur'ān and Qirā'āt this does not unite and make them the same thing. Thus the difference between them remains clearly distinguishable.

Ibn al-Jazarī does not make a comparison between the Qur'ān and the Qirā'āt in their definitions, but he seems to have opted for the definition of the Qirā'āt given by al-Zarkashī. He states that Qirā'āt is the science of knowing the agreement of the transmitters

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1. Edited by al-Dabbā<sup>C</sup>, Cairo, 1359.

2. al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, vol.I, p.318, Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, pp.170-171 and Ithāf fudalā' al-Bashar, p.5.

and their differing in the transmission of the Qur'ān as regards lughah and i<sup>c</sup>rab, and the orthographical differences between the maṣāḥif.<sup>1</sup>

#### The compilation of Qirā'āt and the earliest compilers

The first step in the collection of Qirā'āt was that certain scholars started collecting Qirā'āt and composing books on them, without restricting themselves to a fixed number of Qirā'āt. The first scholar known to us as having composed a book on Qirā'āt is Yaḥyā b. Ya<sup>c</sup>mur (d.129/746) who is reported as having authored a book on the Qirā'āt according to the <sup>c</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif,<sup>2</sup> followed by Ya<sup>c</sup>qūb b. Ishāq al-Ḥadramī (d.205/820) who composed a book on Qirā'āt called al-Jāmi<sup>c</sup>.<sup>3</sup>

According to Ibn al-Jazarī the first author on the subject is Abū <sup>c</sup>Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d.224/838). His book is reported to have included twenty five readings.<sup>4</sup> He was followed by many other scholars who composed books on the Qirā'āt of the cities. Aḥmad b. Jubayr al-Kūfī (d.258/871) is reported to have written a book on the readings of the five cities, selecting a Qārī' from each city. This was followed by the book of Ismā<sup>c</sup>il b. Ishāq al-Mālikī (d.282/895) which is said to have contained readings of twenty Qurra'. After

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1. Munjid, p.3.

2. Qurtubī, vol.I, p.63.

3. al-Zabīdī, Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyyīn wa-al-Naḥwīyyīn, p.51.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.34 and Latā'if, vol.I, p.85.

this came al-Ṭabarī (d.310/922), whose book on Qirā'āt is reported to have contained more than twenty readings and was followed by that of al-Dājūnī (d.324/935) which is reported to have included eleven readings. They were followed by Ibn Mujāhid (d.324/935), the first scholar known to have introduced the seven Qurra' and to have selected them from the five cities, Madīnah, Makkah, Kūfah, Baṣrah and Shām (Damascus).<sup>1</sup> His book is entitled Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah.<sup>2</sup> The Qurra' whose readings were compiled by Ibn Mujāhid are the following:

<u>The Qārī'</u>	<u>His district</u>
Nāfi <sup>C</sup> (d.169/785)	Madīnah
Ibn Kathīr (d.120/737)	Makkah
Ibn <sup>C</sup> Āmir (d.118/736)	Damascus
Abū <sup>C</sup> Amr (d.154/770)	Baṣrah
<sup>C</sup> Āsim (d.128/744)	Kūfah
Ḥamzah (d.156/772)	Kūfah
al-Kisā'ī (d.189/804)	Kūfah

This work of Ibn Mujāhid was criticised by certain scholars of his time on the grounds that it had created confusion among the common people between the two terms of the seven ahruf and the seven canonical readings.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly for the purpose of removing

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1. Latā'if, vol.I, pp.85-86 and al-Nashr, vol.II, pp.33-34.

2. Edited by Shawqī Dayf, Cairo, 1972.

3. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.36-37 and Munjid, pp.70-71.

this claimed confusion certain scholars are reported to have composed books on the Qirā'āt of only one Qārī', or eight or ten Qurra'.<sup>1</sup>

In support of Ibn Mujāhid's book, his pupil Abū Ṭāhir Ibn Abī Hāshim states that people went too far and misunderstood Ibn Mujāhid, who was far beyond what people thought about him and was more intelligent than to confuse the seven ahruf and the seven readings.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is argued that his intention in selecting seven was simply that he wanted this number to agree with the number seven which occurs with regard to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Mujāhid mentions in his introduction his reasons for selecting these seven Qurra', basing his arguments on the evaluation of the men rather than their Qirā'āt.<sup>4</sup>

Although the ruwāt of his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah were very numerous he selected only two or three ruwāt for each Qārī'. His reason for reducing them was to facilitate readings by choosing the two most prominent among the ruwāt who, according to him, were the most knowledgeable and reliable.

They may be classified as follows:

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1. al-Nashr, pp.43-44.
  2. Munjid, pp.72-73.
  3. Latā'if, vol.I, p.86.
  4. Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, pp.45-46.

<u>The Qārī</u>	<u>His first Rāwī</u>	<u>His second Rāwī</u>
Nāfi <sup>C</sup>	Qālūn (d.220/835)	Warsh (d.197/812)
Ibn Kathīr	al-Bazzī (d.250/854)	Qunbul (d.291/903)
Ibn <sup>C</sup> Āmir	Hishām (d.245/859)	Ibn Dhakwān (d.242/856)
Abū <sup>C</sup> Amr	al-Dūrī (d.246/860)	al-Sūsī (d.261/874)
<sup>C</sup> Āṣim	Shu <sup>C</sup> bah (d.193/809)	Ḥafṣ (d.180/805)
Ḥamzah	Khalaf (d.229/843)	Khallād (d.220/835)
al-Kisā'ī	Abū al-Ḥārith (d.240/854)	al-Dūrī (d.246/860) <sup>1</sup>

Ibn Mujāhid's work was adopted and revived among his followers like Makkī b. Abī Tālib al-Qaysī in his al-Tabṣirah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C2</sup> and al-Kashf<sup>C</sup>an Wujūh al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C3</sup> and al-Dānī whose book al-Taysīr was adopted and followed by the scholars and has become to the present day the standard work for students of the seven readings in their fourteen versions.

Ibn Mujāhid regards the readings other than his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah as shādh<sup>4</sup>. This was objected to by certain scholars on the grounds that there were many Qurra' whose status was argued to be the same as his al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah or even greater, like Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far of Madinah (d.128/747), the teacher of Nāfi<sup>C</sup>, whom Ibn Mujāhid himself mentioned in his introduction as a learned and respected Qārī'. Furthermore, Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb al-Ḥaḍramī of Baṣrah (d.205/820) was one of his own al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah

1. ibid., al-Budūr al-Zāhirah, pp.8-9.

2. Edited by al-Nadawī, India, 1983.

3. Edited by Ramadān, 2 vols., Damascus, 1974.

4. al-Muhtasib, vol.I, pp.32-33.

before he replaced him by al-Kisā'ī. The reading of Khalaf al-Baghdādī (d.229/843) in addition to these two has been argued to be as authentic as al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah of Ibn Mujāhid. Thus according to this view the successive readings are ten, these three latter readings being added to the seven of Ibn Mujāhid.<sup>1</sup>

However, according to certain other scholars, some or all readings of the following Qurra' are argued to be authentic and accepted readings:

Ibn Muḥayṣin (d.123/740 A.D.) of Makkah

al-Yazīdī (d.202/817 A.D.) of Baṣrah

al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110/728 A.D.) of Baṣrah

al-A<sup>C</sup>mash (d.148/765 A.D.) of Kūfah

In their support it is pointed out that the acceptability of a reading should be subject only to the conditions for the accepted readings, and that the transmission of some or all these readings is authentic according to certain districts or people who received it in the manner of tawātur.<sup>2</sup> However, al-Qaṣṭallānī asserts that the readings which were agreed to be Qirā'āt Shādhah are these remaining four after the ten.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, according to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, Abū Naṣr al-Subkī, his son Abū'l-Ḥasan and al-Baghawī all readings over the existing ten readings are anomalous (shādhah).<sup>4</sup>

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1. Munjid, p.15 and al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.36-36.

2. Ibn Taymiyya, Fatawā, vol.XIII, pp.392-393, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Qirā'āt al-Mashhūrah, pp.269-271, al-Nashr, vol.I, p.39.

3. Latā'if, vol.I, pp.77,170.

4. Munjid, p.16.

In conclusion to this chapter we may say that variations in readings have existed since the lifetime of the Prophet and that everyone of those who differed in reading used to refer to the fact that they had been taught by the Prophet in this way. The successors followed the companions in this practice and among them certain distinguished Qurra' were sent to different cities to teach the people the Qur'an. The number of the Qurra' increased and certain of them became famous and devoted themselves to the Qirā'āt; hence the readings are attributed to them and eventually the seven highly esteemed readings dominated and were canonised by the selection of Ibn Mujāhid, although an additional three readings are argued to have the same position as the seven of Ibn Mujāhid. The successive readings have been studied together with the definition of shādh and its development. Thus we find that the acceptability of any reading is subject to the conditions ruling accepted readings whose development has been studied. It is confirmed that the seven readings are entirely different from the seven ahruf since the first compilers and books on the subject used to collect readings without limited number. It is emphasised that riwāyah is the most important condition for acceptability of any reading, and that any reading which does not correspond with riwāyah or the other two conditions, i.e. agreement with the maṣāhif and the Arabic language is regarded as shādh, obscure or completely unacceptable.

## CHAPTER 7

### IKHTIYĀR IN THE QIRĀ'AH AND ITS BASES



## CHAPTER 7

### IKHTIYĀR IN THE QIRĀ'AH AND ITS BASES

The question of ikhtiyār concerns the fact that certain qualified scholars may select one or more readings from among a number of readings, basing their ikhtiyār on the most authentic and fluent ways of reading in their judgement.<sup>1</sup> The method of the Qurra' who are reported to have chosen certain Qirā'āt is based on the three conditions for accepted readings, fluency of Arabic, correspondence with the maṣāḥif and agreement of the Āmma on accepting them.<sup>2</sup> This term Āmma is interpreted either as meaning the people of Madīnah and Kūfah, this being a strong reason for ikhtiyār, or as the people of Makkah and Madīnah.<sup>3</sup>

Discussing the attribution of Qirā'āt to the Qurra', Ibn al-Jazarī states that they selected certain readings and preferred them in their own readings and teaching of their students. This ikhtiyār is only exercised in respect of selection from existing readings, and never extends to inventions or their own composition.<sup>4</sup> In this connection we find the word ikhtiyār

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1. al-Tibyān, p.99.

2. See pp.186-196, Chapter 6.

3. al-Murshid al-Wajīz, p.172 and al-Ibānah, p.89.

4. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.51.

occurring frequently in the books of Qirā'āt, for example:

- a. "The ikhtiyār of Ya<sup>c</sup>qūb is followed by the common [people] of Baṣrah."<sup>1</sup>
- b. "The people agreed upon the ikhtiyār of them (i.e. the Qurra' of the ten readings)."<sup>2</sup>
- c. "In this book I have mentioned the readings of distinguished Qurra' who were famous by their Qirā'āt and ikhtiyārāt."<sup>3</sup>
- d. Ibn Khālawayh in the work attributed to him al-Hujjah Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>c4</sup> mentions of the seven Qurra' that they based their ikhtiyār on the āthār (traditions).<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt as to the essentiality of depending on the āthār for any ikhtiyār in the Qirā'āt, nor that it is not left to the discretion of anyone to adopt or select readings which are not subject to the conditions for accepted readings mentioned above. Accordingly, any reading which does not conform to these conditions is rejected and regarded as shādh.<sup>6</sup>

The next step after ikhtiyār and the compilation of the Qirā'āt was that certain scholars started composing books to establish the authenticity of certain selected readings on the basis of transmission, correspondence with the maṣāḥif and fluency of Arabic,

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1. Ghayāt al-Nihāyah, vol.II, p.43.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.37.

3. ibid.

4. Edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed., Dar al-Shurūq, Beirut, 1397/1977.

5. ibid., p.62.

6. See p23f. below and p.190 Chapter 6.

bearing in mind that the philologists differed concerning the degree of fluency required for accepted readings or preferred ones. Accordingly views differed among the Qurra' and the philologists and hence their ikhtiyār differed. The first author known to us as having composed a book on this subject is al-Mubarrid (d.285/898) who was the author of a book entitled Kitāb Iḥtijāj al-Qirā'āt.<sup>1</sup> He was followed by Abū Bakr b. al-Sarrāj (d.316/928), Kitāb Iḥtijāj al-Qirā'ah,<sup>2</sup> Ibn Darastuwayh (died after 330), Kitāb al-Iḥtijāj Li-al-Qurra',<sup>3</sup> Ibn Miqsam (d.332/943), the author of several books on Qirā'āt, Kitāb Iḥtijāj al-Qirā'āt, Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah bi-<sup>C</sup>Ilaliḥā al-Kabīr, Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah al-Awsaṭ and Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah al-Ṣaghīr known as Shifā' al-Ṣudūr.<sup>4</sup> Abū Ṭāhir <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Wāḥid al-Bazzār (d.349/960) a pupil of Ibn Mujāḥid and author of Kitāb al-Intiṣar li-Hamzah,<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī (d.351/962) to whom is attributed Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah bi-<sup>C</sup>Ilaliḥā al-Kabīr,<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khālawayh (d.370/980) to whom is attributed Kitāb al-Hujjah fī'l-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C</sup>,<sup>7</sup> Abū <sup>C</sup>Alī al-Fārisī the author of a large

1. al-Fihrist, p.65.

2. ibid., p.86.

3. ibid., pp.38 and 68-69.

4. ibid., pp.35-36.

5. ibid., p.35.

6. ibid., p.50.

7. Edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1397-1977. The authenticity of this attribution to Ibn Khālawayh is disputed; see Muḥammad al-<sup>C</sup>Ābid al-Fāsī, "Nisbat al-Hujjah ilā Ibn Khālawayh Lā Taṣiḥḥ", Majallat al-Lisān al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, vol.VIII, pt.I, p.5 21 and al-Afghānī, (ed.) Hujjat al-Qirā'āt, p.24.

book in support of his teacher Ibn Mujāhid's Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah entitled Kitāb al-Hujjah li-al-Qurrā' al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah,<sup>1</sup> Abū Zar<sup>C</sup>ah <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad b. Zanjalah (one of al-Fārisī's students) whose Hujjatu al-Qirā'āt<sup>2</sup> was composed before (403/1012)<sup>3</sup> and Abū Bakr Ahmad b. <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Idrīs whose al-Mukhtār fī Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī Qirā'āt Ahl al-Amsār includes the reading of Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb al-Hadramī in addition to the seven of Ibn Mujāhid.<sup>4</sup>

In the fifth century we find Makkī's (d.437/1080) book al-Kashf <sup>C</sup>An Wujūh al-Qirā'āt al-Sab<sup>C</sup> Wa-<sup>C</sup>Ilalihā Wa-Hujajihā.<sup>5</sup>

#### Refutation of free exercise of choice in selection of readings

Ibn al-Bāqillāni is concerned that certain ignorant people might misinterpret the differences between the Qurrā' as meaning that they were absolutely free to choose whatever way of reading they desired. He asserts that this view is groundless and that it is agreed unanimously that no single reading should be accepted unless it has been transmitted with authentic chains. The condition of riwāyah, he says, is most essential and obvious from the practice of all Qurrā' of the Qur'ān, since they used not to react immediately themselves by rejecting any reading they heard from each other for

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1. al-Fihrist, p.69. This book of Ibn Fāris is edited by al-Najjār and others, vol.I, 1st ed., Cairo 1966.

2. Edited by Sa<sup>C</sup>īd al-Afghānī, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1399-1979.

3. ibid., pp.30 and 39.

4. ibid., p.22.

5. Edited by Ramadān, 2 vols., Damascus, 1394-1974.

the first time, fearing that it might be authentic and based on the riwāyah according to the other readers. In this connection al-A<sup>C</sup>mash is reported as having said that when he used to read in a different way from what he had been taught by his teacher Ibrāhim al-Nakha<sup>C</sup>ī the latter used not to say 'it is wrong' but said 'read so and so'.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Bāqillānī comments that since this was the practice of the salaf, how it could be that they would allow the Qur'ān to be read without fulfillment of the condition of riwāyah?<sup>2</sup> In support of the condition of riwāyah we also find a large number of statements attributed to distinguished and famous Qurra' of the Qur'ān among whom we may quote the following:

- a. Nāfi<sup>C</sup> is reported to have said that he had been taught the Qur'ān from seventy Qurra' among the Followers, and that he based his ikhtiyār on the agreement of two of them.<sup>3</sup>
- b. Ibn Mujāhid states that Nāfi<sup>C</sup> was following the āthār of the Qurra' before him.<sup>4</sup>
- c. Sufyān al-Thawrī is reported to have supported the reading of Hamzah on the grounds that "he had not read a single Harf of the Qur'ān without depending on āthār".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Nukat al-Intisār, p.415.

2. ibid., p.416.

3. Ibn Mujāhid, Kitāb al-Sab<sup>C</sup>ah, p.62.

4. ibid., p.54.

5. ibid., p.82.

- d. Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Alā' is reported to have said that if he had been free to read in certain ways as he desired, he would have read so and so.<sup>1</sup>
- e. He is also reported as having been asked concerning his own reading and ikhtiyār whether he had heard it all from the salaf. To this he replied that if he had not heard it, he would not have read it, because reading of the Qur'ān should be according to the sunnah (i.e. riwāyah).<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Ibn al-Bāqillānī states that it is forbidden to read in a way not corresponding with riwāyah.<sup>3</sup>

As regards the grounds on which the Qurra' support their ikhtiyār, using grammatical and other evidences, Ibn al-Bāqillānī says that the Qurra' who substantiate their own readings all agree that they have been transmitted from the Prophet himself and that there is no objection to adding the evidence of riwāyah other logical evidence in support of riwāyah. No one among the Qurra' is doing more than supporting his ikhtiyār, explaining why he selects this reading but not rejecting or refuting the readings of other Qurra'. He only says in support of his own ikhtiyār that this way is the most fluent in Arabic and more beautiful than the others.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore al-Qaṣṭallānī states that preference as between certain readings is based only on the grounds of conformity to the

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1. Ghāyat al-Nihāyah, vol.I, p.290.

2. Nukat al-Intiṣār, p.417.

3. ibid., p.418.

4. ibid., pp.419-420.

most eloquent and best known ways in the Arabic language, since they are all authentic and accepted readings.<sup>1</sup> Hence, linguistic evidences in support of the Qirā'āt are used only to substantiate the reason for choosing or selecting this way of reading other than others, but never as the sole reason for ikhtiyār. In this connection Ibn al-Munayyir objects to al-Zamakhsharī who thought that the seven distinguished Qurra' had exercised their ikhtiyār at will as if they were free from the condition of riwāyah.<sup>2</sup> The right of using ikhtiyār among the various authentic readings is still permissible among the scholars provided that it is according to the riwāyah and used by qualified and authorised Qurra'.<sup>3</sup>

The right of ikhtiyār is restricted to use only in accordance with riwāyah. A free hand in using synonyms or reading according to the meanings of the vocabulary of the Qur'ān is not regarded as ikhtiyār because it contradicts the conditions for accepted readings, hence it is strongly rejected and considered beyond the shādh.<sup>4</sup> The scholars agreed unanimously that this kind is forbidden and should be stopped and destroyed. Certain examples which represent this, which are attributed to the personal codices, were regarded as either unauthentic in their transmission or abrogated according to the final revealed version of the Qur'ān.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Latā'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.170.

2. al-Intiṣāf with al-Kashshāf, vol.II, pp.69-70.

3. al-Nashr, vol.I, pp.44.

4. Nukat al-Intiṣār, pp.321-330 and Munjid, pp.17-18.

5. See, for more information, chapter 4, p.122f.

Goldziher uses examples of this latter kind of reading to conclude that they were used to make fundamental changes in the successive readings,<sup>1</sup> ignoring the fact that all readings of this kind in contradiction of the common accepted readings are regarded as shādh and isolated reports opposed to the mutawātir.<sup>2</sup> Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah on the other hand is reported as having said that the purpose of this kind of anomalous reading is to explain the meanings of the well known (mashhūr) readings.<sup>3</sup>

The text of the Qur'ān is agreed to represent in its written form the first Harf in which it has been revealed.<sup>4</sup> Thus the other various ways of reading in accordance with the permission to read the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, regardless of the differences of the scholars in their interpretation, were only variations in the ways of reading, which had to correspond with riwāyah. In this respect we notice the companions and their followers referring their readings to the teaching of the Prophet himself, taking as an example the case of <sup>C</sup>Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Hishām b. Ḥakīm.<sup>5</sup>

Thus Ibn Khālawayh in his Kitāb I<sup>C</sup>rāb Thalāthīn Sūrah min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm<sup>6</sup> states that the only authentic and accepted reading in the beginning of (S.LXXXVII, 1) is Sabbih Isma Rabbika

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1. Goldziher, al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.17. c.f. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.19.

2. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, pp.192-193.

3. Itqān, vol.I, p.82.

4. See p.106, Chapter 3.

5. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.48, (quoted in pp.1-2 of Chapter 1).

6. Published in Cairo 1360-1941.



although, linguistically it could be read as Sabbīḥ (bi) Ism(i) Rabbika, as we find elsewhere in the Qur'ān Fasabbīḥ bi-Ḥamdi Rabbika (S.XV, 98) but this is not accepted because the Qirā'ah should be according to the riwāyah.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī asserts that to use free analogy in selecting certain readings is forbidden. He attributes to certain companions and their followers (ʿUmar, Zayd, Ibn al-Mukandir, ʿUrwah, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and al-Shaʿbī) the statement: "Qirā'ah should be according to the sunnah (i.e. transmission of generations, one from each other) and everyone should read as he has been taught".<sup>2</sup>

The ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif are said to have been freed from vocalisation and dotting in order to preserve various authentic readings which correspond with the orthography of the maṣāḥif, but not to create readings according to every possible way of reading the text.<sup>3</sup>

For example Sībawayh in his al-Kitāb<sup>4</sup> supports certain Qirā'āt and objects to certain other ways although they might be substantiated linguistically, only on the ground that the Qirā'ah should be according to the sunnah, and it should not be disputed or not accepted by the ʿāmmah.<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., p.54.

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.17.

3. Munjid, p.56.

4. Published in Būlāq, 1316/1898.

5. ibid., vol.I, p.74.

Furthermore he uses certain Qirā'āt in support of grammatical arguments to substantiate the authenticity of certain grammatical constructions; for example he says the evidence for the authenticity of a certain construction is the reading of the people of Madīnah.<sup>1</sup>

We find earlier among the companions and their followers the phenomenon of supporting certain chosen Qirā'āt, mentioning the reasons for which this way or that is to be preferred. The first man among the companions known to us as having adopted the practise of choosing certain Qirā'āt and explaining the reasons for his choices is Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās<sup>2</sup> who is reported as having read Nanshuruḥā (S.II, 259) substantiating his reading by quoting Thumma Idhā Shā'a Ansharah (S.LXXX, 22).

Among the earlier philologists we find al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad followed by his student Sībawayh using grammatical, morphological and phonetical evidences to substantiate the authenticity of certain Qirā'āt.<sup>3</sup>

We also notice this phenomenon of choosing and selecting certain Qirā'āt, and supporting them with various evidences in the discussions of Quranic scholars and in the form of books on such topics as Tafsīr,<sup>4</sup> Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān,<sup>5</sup> and I<sup>C</sup>rāb al-Qur'ān.<sup>6</sup>

1. al-Kitāb, vol.I., p.417 and passim.

2. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, vol.II, p.293.

3. al-Kitāb, Passim.

4. i.e. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt in 8 vols.

5. i.e. al-Farrā', Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān in 3 vols.

6. i.e. Ibn Khalawagh, I<sup>C</sup>rāb Thalāthīn Sūrah Min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Cairo 1360-1941.

For example al-Zajjāj in his Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān Wa-I<sup>C</sup>rābuh<sup>1</sup> studies linguistically the various ways of readings for al-Hamdu (I, 2) and adopts raf<sup>C</sup> because it corresponds with the authentic riwāyah which should be followed in the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Hārūn b. Mūsā al-A<sup>C</sup>war (d. before 200/815) is reported to have used to gather certain readings and to have investigated their transmission and other evidences in order to authenticate them.<sup>3</sup> This work of al-A<sup>C</sup>war was objected to by the people of his time on the grounds that the acceptability and authenticity of any Qirā'ah should be subject only to its successive transmission.<sup>4</sup>

In this connection Abū Ḥayyān reports Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Abbās Aḥmad b. Yahyā as having been accustomed not to make preferences between the seven readings and having said "when the seven Qurra' differ concerning the i<sup>C</sup>rāb in the Qur'ān I do not prefer one to another, but when I turn to the ordinary speech of the people I prefer the form which is stronger". Abū Ḥayyān approves the above statement, referring to Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Abbās as reliable, a man of religion and a scholar of grammar and language.<sup>5</sup>

According to certain writers numerous variations in ways of reading came about because the maṣāḥif were free from vocalisation

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1. Edited by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Jalīl Shalabī, Cairo, 1394-1974.

2. ibid., vol.I, p.7.

3. Munjid, p.69.

4. ibid., pp.69-70.

5. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.IV, p.87.

and dotting and hence differences of opinions took place among the Qurra' as a result of the different possible readings.<sup>1</sup> An early example of this tendency is provided by Ibn Miqdam (d.328/939) who is said to have relied only on the written text of the muṣḥaf and the Arabic language. He was prevented from propagating his views by the Abbasid authorities, backed by the consensus of Quranic scholars of his time. This approach however is not valid, for as we have seen the Qirā'ah was subject to the riwāyah, and we have the example of the argument between <sup>C</sup>Umar and Hishām where each of them referred to the Prophet as his authority.<sup>2</sup> The various readings were only according to the riwāyah, and were in existence before the compilation of the Qur'ān and the distribution of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif to the amṣār which were themselves accompanied by distinguished Qurra' to teach the people of their cities according to the riwāyah.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, if the people had been left free to read according to their inclinations in any way possible compatible with the orthography of the muṣḥaf it might have been expected that all such readings would have been accepted. For example, from the grammatical point of view the Quranic phrase kun fayakūn (S.III, 47 and S.XXXVI, 82) can be read either with naṣb or raf<sup>C</sup>, but the only way accepted in (S.III, 47) is raf<sup>C</sup> while both ways are accepted in (S.XXXVI, 82).<sup>4</sup>

1. See for example Brockelmann, Tārīkh al-Adab al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī, vol.I, p.134, al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.4. c.f. Goldziher, Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.8. al-Khaṭīb, al-Furqān, p.22 (also 17), al-Ibyārī, al-Mawsū<sup>C</sup>ah al-Qur'āniyyah, vol.I, p.80 and al-Khū'ī, al-Bayān, p.181.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.482-483.

3. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.183 and p.48 of Chapter 2.

4. al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān wa-Gharā'ib Rasmiḥ wa-Hukmiḥ, p.115.

Another example of this kind is found in (S.XXII, 23) where the word لَوْ لَوْ is written with alif while the same word is written without alif in S.XXXV, 33. If the Qurra' had followed only the orthography they would have read it with naṣb in the first example and with khafd in the latter. However, Nāfi<sup>c</sup> and Āṣim read them both with naṣb, while the rest of the Qurra' read the first with naṣb and the latter with khafd.<sup>1</sup>

As regards dotting the only way of reading found in S.II, 123 is walā tanfa<sup>c</sup>uha shafā<sup>c</sup>atun while a similar example is read in both ways, with yā' and tā', in the same sūrah, i.e. walā yuqbalu minhā shafā<sup>c</sup>atun and wala tuqbalu minhā shafā<sup>c</sup>atun (S.II,48)<sup>2</sup>

In S.IV, 94 the word فسيوا is read both possible ways fatathabbatū and fatabayyanū, because both were transmitted, while in S.IX, 114 the word اباه is readable according to the orthography as īyyāhu this being the authentic reading attributed to the Āmmah, while the other possible way, abāhu, being an anomalous reading contradictory to the common reading, is regarded as a strange reading, although it is attributed to Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah. Furthermore, in S.VII, 48 the word سكروون is read by the Āmmah as tastakbirūn, as opposed to the strange reading tastakthirūn which is regarded as shādhdh on the grounds that it contradicts the riwāyah.<sup>3</sup>

1. Abū Shāmah, Ibrāz al-Ma<sup>c</sup>ānī, p.406.

2. al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, pp.114-115.

3. Shalabī, Rasm al-Muṣḥaf wa-al-Ihtijāj bi li-al-Qirā'āt, p.28.

On the other hand in certain words we find various authentic readings, e.g. jibrīl, jabrīl, jabra'īl and jabra'il, while the orthography itself does not provide them all, which also confirms the essentiality of riwāyah.<sup>1</sup> Some other Quranic words are written in a way different from the usual one, but only indicate a single reading, which is that which is according to the riwāyah.

Examples of this kind are لَا أَذْكَتُهَا (S.XXVII, 21)

لِشَايْ (S.XVIII, 23) and وَجَايْ (S.LXXXIX, 23)

with the addition of an alif, which are read la-adhbahannahū,

li-shay'in and jī'a. In this connection also we find بِأَيْدٍ

(S.LI, 47) and بِأَيِّكُمْ (S.LXVIII, 6) with the addition of a

yā' which are read bi-aydin and bi-ayyikum.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly the

original basis of any Qirā'ah is agreed to be the riwāyah, while the orthography is always dependant on this.<sup>3</sup> Hence we find in

practice that the Qurrā' read in certain places with consensus and differ in certain others although they are orthographically the

same. For example they agree unanimously in S.III, 26 (Mālik al-Mulk) and in (S.CXIV, 2) (Malik al-Nās), but they differ in S.I, 4

as certain Qurrā' read (Malik) and other read (Mālik), these

readings all being authentic because of the soundness of their transmission.<sup>4</sup>

1. al-Kurdī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, pp.115-116.

2. ibid., p.116.

3. Abū Shāmah, Ibrāz al-Ma'ānī, p.406.

4. al-Nashr, vol.II, pp.239, 405 and vol.I, p.271 and Tahbīr al-Taysīr, pp.96, 200 and 41.

Moreover, we find certain theoretical ways of reading which correspond with the orthography of the maṣāḥif and agree with the Arabic language but which no one among the Qurra' is reported as having read; this also tends to confirm the essentiality of riwāyah. In this connection scholars refer to (S.XVII, 106) Wa-Qur'ānan Faraqnāhu Li'taqra'ahu <sup>Ḥ</sup>alā al-nāsi <sup>Ḥ</sup>alā mukthin, which from the linguistic point of view could be read mukth, makth and mikth, but is only read by the consensus of the Qurra' as (mukth).<sup>1</sup>

Goldziher advances the theory that these different readings arise from certain Qurra' interpreting a vocalised and undotted text in accordance with their own understanding at a relatively late date. However as we have seen above this theory overlooks the importance of riwāyah and ignores the existence of the vast number of scholars who had devoted their studies to this subject.

Whatever the reasons for the existence of variant readings, whether accepted or shādh, the explanations which Goldziher offers do not seem to rest on any real evidence. An examination of some of the examples discussed by Goldziher will serve to clarify this. For example he refers to a report that Qatādah (d.117/735) in S.II,54 read (Fa-Aqīlū Anfusakum) instead of the authentic reading (Fa-Uqtulū Anfusakum). Goldziher maintains that Qatādah considered the latter reading to convey a severe punishment which was incompatible with the sin mentioned and thus recited the passage in the alternative

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1. al-Bahr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, p.88.

way attributed to him above; commenting on this he says "In this example we see an objective point of view which was the reason behind the differing reading".<sup>1</sup>

However, against this we find that all versions except one report Qatādah as having read Fa'qtulū anfusakum and having interpreted it as meaning that they stood fighting each other in two rows until they were asked to stop and that it was martyrdom for those who were killed and repentance for those who remained alive.<sup>2</sup> al-Qurtubī, who reports Qatādah as having read Fa-aqīlū anfusakum interpretes the word aqīlū (save) as meaning "save yourselves from error by killing", thereby giving it the same meaning as aqtulū.<sup>3</sup> Another example of this is Goldziher's treatment of XLVIII, 9, in which on this occasion he uses certain authentic readings as opposed to others. Thus he notes that Tu<sup>c</sup>azzirūhu is read by certain Qurra' as Tu<sup>c</sup>azzizūhu using zāy instead of rā'. The reason behind this supposed change, he suggests tentatively, is that they may have wished to avoid the former word because it implies, according to him, material aid, while the latter word is less restricted in meaning.<sup>4</sup> In fact, however, both words occur in different places in the Qur'ān, for

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1. al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.5. c.f. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.11.
  2. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.II, p.76 c.f. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, Vol.I, p.92 .
  3. al-Qurtubī, vol.I, p.342.
  4. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.11.



example in S.VII, 157 and S.XLVIII, 9, with no apparent difference in meaning. Furthermore, in the Arabic lexicon, there are no differences between Ḥazzara and Naṣara. Ibn Manẓūr interprets Ḥazzarahu as fakhkhamahu, wa-Ḥazzamahu, sa-aḤānahu, wa-qawwāhu, wa-naṣarahu. He quotes in support of his interpretation (S.XLVIII, 9) Li-tuḤazzirūhu wa-tuwaqqirūhu) and (S. V, 12) Wa-Ḥazzartumūhum.<sup>1</sup> He adds that in the Arabic language al-TaḤzīr means al-Naṣr by tongue and sword. He reports Warāqah b. Nawfal as having said in support of the Prophet at the very beginning of the revelation, if he is sent while I am alive I will aid him (sa-uḤazziruhu wa-anṣuruhu). Ibn Manẓūr says of this; al-taḤzīr hāhunā al-IḤānah wa-al-tawqīr wa-al-naṣr marratan baḤd marra.<sup>2</sup> Thus it cannot really be maintained that there is any difference in meaning between Ḥazzara and Ḥazzaza.

Continuing the same general approach, Goldziher considers that certain differences between the Qurṛā' are due to their fear of attributing to God and his Apostle something which may detract from their attributes.

In support of this theory he quotes S.XXXVII, 12 BaḤ Ajibta wa-yaskharūn (Truly dost thou marvel while they ridicule), in which some of the Qurṛā' of Kūfah read ḤAjibta with fath, while the common reading of the rest of the Qurṛā' is with damm, i.e.

1. Lisān al-ḤArab, vol.VI, p.237.

2. ibid.

<sup>C</sup>Ajibtu. He argues that the Mufasssirūn interpreted the word <sup>C</sup>ajab as referring to God with a difference of opinions, while some preferred to attribute the 'marvelling' to the Prophet, since it is inappropriate to attribute this to God. He maintains that the original reading is <sup>C</sup>Ajibtu with damm and quotes al-Ṭabarī. In fact, however, al-Ṭabarī authenticates and accepts both readings on the grounds that the Qur'ān has been revealed in two ways<sup>1</sup> although he does mention that Shurayḥ (d. 80/699) used to read <sup>C</sup>Ajibta with fath and objected to the other reading, on the grounds that <sup>C</sup>Ajab cannot be attributed to God. However Ibrāhīm al-Nakha<sup>Cī</sup> is reported as having objected to Shurayḥ's argument and stated that <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh Mas<sup>Cū</sup>d who used to read <sup>C</sup>Ajibtu with damm was more knowledgable than Shurayḥ.<sup>2</sup> According to Goldziher the two readings contradict one another, and the acceptance by al-Ṭabarī of both readings indicates that it was difficult at his time to abandon one reading in favour of the other.<sup>3</sup> However, al-Ṭabarī in his discussion confirms the authenticity of both readings and states that although they differ in meaning, they are both correct and sound. He states in support of this view that the Prophet marvelled at the verses which he was given, that the polytheists ridiculed him for this and that God marvelled at what the polytheists said.

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XXIII, 29.

2. al-Kashshāf, vol.IV, pp.37-38.

3. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, pp.33-35.

Furthermore, al-Qurtubī reports <sup>C</sup>Alī b. Sulaymān as having said that both readings agree to give one meaning and that the reference in both <sup>C</sup>Ajibta and <sup>C</sup>Ajibtu is to the Prophet. He also quotes Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far al-Nahhās as having approved this interpretation and regarded it as a sound one. al-Qurtubī adds that the meaning of Bal <sup>C</sup>Ajibtu may be something like "truly their action is heinous in my eyes" and he quotes al-Bayhaqī in support of this as having connected the word <sup>C</sup>ajiba in this context with the Hadīth <sup>C</sup>Ajiba Rabbuka.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, al-Naqqāsh is reported as having interpreted Bal <sup>C</sup>ajibtu as Bal ankartu. al-Hasan b. al-Faḍl is reported as having supported this by stating that <sup>C</sup>ajab when it refers to God means inkār and ta<sup>C</sup>zīm and that this is an old Arab usage (wa-huwa lughat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab).<sup>2</sup>

In fact if readings were really not subject to the riwāyah, or if a supposed fear of attributing to God and his Apostle certain defects had led the Qurra' to change certain ways of reading, as Goldziher thought, one might expect the Qurra' to have changed many similar examples in the Qur'ān, while in actual fact they have done nothing except to interpret them according to the Arabic language. Examples may be quoted as follows:

a. "God disdains not (lā Yastahī) to use the similitude of things lowest as well as highest." (S.II, 26 )

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b. "They plot and plan and God too plans, But the best of planners is God." (S.VIII, 30).

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1. For the text of this Hadīth and others see Qurtubī, vol.XV pp.70-71.

2. *ibid.*, p.71.

c. "...Nay, both his hands are widely outstretched.  
He giveth and spendeth (of His bounty, as He  
pleaseth... ." (S.V, 67)

d. "Soon shall we settle your affairs o both ye worlds!" (S.LV,31)<sup>1</sup>

Moreover Shurayh's opinion was rejected and regarded as unacceptable, and thus was not followed by anyone, on the grounds that he contradicted the tawātur.<sup>2</sup> Finally, there is no evidence whatever for Goldziher's hypothesis that <sup>C</sup>Ajibtu with damm is the original reading.

The mufasssirūn interpret the verse so that both readings confirm one another,<sup>3</sup> and the Qurra' accept and authenticate the two readings, because they agree with the conditions for accepted readings.<sup>4</sup>

Goldziher further argues that in S.XII, 110 the original reading is Kadhabū and that the Muslims were confused and faced with the problem of finding a way out from this reading. According to him many solutions were suggested, a fact which indicates that it was the original reading, and the readings Kudhibū and Kudhdhibū were introduced subsequently by the Qurra'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hammūdah, al-Qirā'āt wa-al-lahajāt, pp.199-206.

2. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf, vol.IV, p.38 and al-Alūsī, Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī vol.XXIII, p.70.

3. al-Tabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XXIII, p.29, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf vol.XXIII, p.70.

4. al-Nashr, vol.II, p.356, al-Kashf, vol.II, p.223 and Hujjat al-Qirā'āt pp.606-608.

5. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.42.

Once again, however, it seems pointless to assert that this way or that is the original reading, since the text of the Qur'ān does not provide any evidence for such a claim. This reading in fact is not attributed to any Qāri' except Mujāhid.<sup>1</sup> — Indeed, it has been argued that the original readings are Kudhibū and Kudhhibū, which are the common ones, and that the anomalous reading which is attributed solely to Mujāhid is derived from the two authentic readings,<sup>2</sup> and not as Goldziher maintained the opposite.<sup>3</sup>

Mujāhid is reported as having interpreted the verse as meaning "when the Apostles gave up hope of their people (who rejected their message) being punished and that their people thought that the Apostles told a lie, there reached them our help".<sup>4</sup>

However, al-Ṭabarī states that this reading has been unanimously rejected on the grounds that it contradicts the authentic readings of the amsār. He argues that if the reading was permissible it would have been interpreted in a way not contradicting the successive readings and better than that of Mujāhid. The best interpretation for Mujāhid's reading according to al-Ṭabarī is as follows: "Until when the Apostles give up hope of their people who treated them as liars - being punished by God and the Apostles knew that their people lied...".

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, pp.309-310, Ibn Khālawayh, Mukhtaṣar p.65 and Fath al-Bārī, vol.VIII, p.296.

2. al-Qirā'āt wa-al-Lahajāt, p.209.

3. al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.25. c.f. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, pp.41-42.

4. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.310.

al-Ṭabarī offers this interpretation, utilizing the authority of al-Ḥasan and Qatādah that zann may give the meaning of <sup>C</sup>Ilm (knowledge).<sup>1</sup> Thus both Mujāhid's reading and his interpretation contradict the consensus of the Qurra' and Mufasssirūn.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī states that Abū al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī in his al-Kāmil attributes to Mujāhid certain readings with a non-authentic isnād<sup>3</sup> and elsewhere mentions of al-Hudhalī that his book is full of errors concerning the Asānīd of Qirā'āt and that his book contains unaccepted readings which have no authentic transmission.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Khālawayh also puts this reading of Mujāhid among the anomalous readings.<sup>5</sup>

Goldziher also mentions <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah's contribution to this discussion, but his account of it seems somewhat misleading, in that the discussion was purely concerned with the question of kudhhibū as opposed to kudhibū, which she rejected in favour of the former,<sup>6</sup> although her objection was in fact to the interpretation attributed to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās rather than the Qirā'ah itself.<sup>7</sup>

al-Qaṣṭallānī argues that her objection was to the Qirā'ah kudhibū on the grounds that she had not received it in the manner of

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.310.

2. ibid., pp.309-310.

3. Ghāyat al-Nihāyah, vol.II, p.42.

4. ibid., vol.I, p.349.

5. Mukhtaṣar, p.65.

6. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, pp.306-308, and Fath al-Bārī, vol.VIII, p.367f.

7. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, pp.306-307.

tawātur.<sup>1</sup> As for the reading Kadhabū, it does not appear at all in this discussion, and Goldziher is incorrect in supposing that she was objecting to Kadhabū.

While Mujāhid's reading is regarded as shādhdh, being attributed only to him, there are two authentic and successive readings, being among the highly esteemed seven canonical readings. The first is Kudhibū which is attributed to Ubayy, <sup>C</sup>Alī, Ibn Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd and Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās among the companions and to their followers Mujāhid, Ṭalḥah and al-A<sup>C</sup>mash and to <sup>C</sup>Āṣim, Ḥamzah and al-Kisā'ī who represent the Kufans among the seven distinguished Qurra'.<sup>2</sup> al-Zamakhsharī based his Tafsīr on this reading and interprets it as meaning: "Until when the Apostles thought that their souls told them a lie when they told them that they would be victorious", or "their hope told them a lie".<sup>3</sup>

Goldziher misunderstood al-Zamakhsharī, believing that his interpretation represented Kadhabū.<sup>4</sup> However a careful reading of it confirms that it is based on Kudhibū, and the matter is settled by the fact that he mentions Kadhabū separately, attributing it to Mujāhid.<sup>5</sup> The second authentic reading is Kudhddhibū which is

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1. Irshād al-Sārī vol.VII, p.216.

2. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.V, p.354.

3. al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.510.

4. al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.25. c.f. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, p.42.

5. al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.510.

attributed to <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah<sup>1</sup> and among the followers to al-Ḥasan, Qatādah, Muḥammad b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b, Abū Rajā', Ibn Abī Mulaykah, and al-A<sup>C</sup>raj<sup>2</sup> and among the seven distinguished Qurrah to Nāfi<sup>C</sup>, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir and Abū <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>C</sup>Alā.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah is reported to have interpreted this verse according to her reading Kudhhibū as follows: "Until when the Apostles give up hope of their people who treated them as liars becoming believers, and the Apostles come to think that they were treated as liars among their own followers, there reached them the help of God".<sup>4</sup>

al-Ṭabarī attributes to certain other scholars who read Kudhhibū the following interpretation of the verse: "Until when the Apostles gave up hope of their people believing in them and the Apostles came to think that (meaning by zann in this context <sup>C</sup>ilm (knowledge) that their people treated them as liars, there reached them our help".<sup>5</sup> This latter interpretation of the word zann to mean <sup>C</sup>ilm is attributed to al-Ḥasan and Qatādah, but al-Ṭabarī objects to it, basing his objection on the grounds that it contradicts the views of the companions. He adds that the Arabs only use the word zann in the place of <sup>C</sup>ilm where the knowledge is acquired by the

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.308.

2. ibid., al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, vol.V, p.354.

Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.309.

ḥarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.308.



means of reports or when it is not physically seen, and thus the word zann in this verse cannot mean ilm.<sup>1</sup>

To take another example, which Goldziher also quotes in support of his theory, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās is reported as having read Fa-In āmanū bi-mā āmantum bi-hī or Fa-In āmanū bi-al-ladhī āmantum bi-hī as opposed to the common reading which corresponds with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif (S.II, 137) Fa-In āmanū bi-mithli mā āmantum bi-hi. Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās bases his objection to the common reading on the grounds that there is no being similar to God.<sup>2</sup>

However al-Ṭabarī states that this report about Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās contradicts the common maṣāḥif of the Muslims and the consensus of the Qurra'.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās himself is reported as having agreed in reading with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif.<sup>4</sup> According to al-Ṭabarī the interpretation of this verse should be that when they believe in what are mentioned in this passage of the books of God and his Prophets as you believe in them they are indeed on the right path. He concludes that what is meant by similarity in this connection is the similarity between two beliefs, not between what they believe in.<sup>5</sup>

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.XVI, p.309.

2. ibid., vol.II, p.114.

3. ibid.

4. ibid., p.113.

5. ibid., p.114.

On this point al-Zajjāj argues that if someone were to ask if there is anything similar to the Imān other than Imān itself, the reply is that the meaning is clear, that is, if they believe as you believe in the Prophets and believe in unity as you do, they are therefore in the straight path and have become Muslims like you.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the author of Kitāb Muqaddimat Kitāb al-Mabānī<sup>2</sup> studies the construction of this verse linguistically and supports its authenticity on the following grounds:

- a. It means if they believe as you believe.
- b. The letter bā' is only added for emphasis (ta'kīd) and the sense of the phrase is mithla mā āmantum bihi.
- c. The word mithl is added in order to give corroboration (tawkīd) and the sense of the phrase is thus Fa-In Āmanū bī-Mā Āmantum bihi.

In this connection reference is made to S.XLII, 11 Laysa Ka-Mithlihi Shay'un where the word mithl is added for the purpose of intensification so that the meaning of the passage is that there is nothing whatever like unto Him. Another example in support of this interpretation is this poetic verse: Kamithl al-Shams Idh Bazaghat Bi-Hā Nuhzā Wa-Mi<sup>C</sup>ṭāru where the word mithl is added in the same way.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān Wa-I<sup>C</sup>rābuhu, vol.I, p.195.

2. anon., see Maqaddimatān, p.116.

3. Muqaddimatān p.116.

Ibn Abī Dāwūd narrates this riwāyah in different versions, but objects to them all and states that it is written Bimithl Mā Āmantum bihi in al-Mushaf al-Imām and all the maṣāḥif of the cities and that it is accepted in the language of the Arabs. It is impossible, he says, that the people of the cities and the companions should have agreed on an error, particularly in the Qur'ān and the practice of prayers. He continues that it is right and accepted in the speech of the Arabs to say to a person who meets you in a manner of which you disapprove "Ayustaqbalu mithlī bi-hādhā?" He quotes in support: (S.XLI, 11) Laysa kamithlihi shay'un which means Laysa kamithli Rabbī shay'un and the expressions Lā yuqālu li wa-lā li-mithlī and Lā yuqālu li-akhīka wa-lā li-mithli akhīka in which these expressions mean "myself".<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, the report attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās like many others which contradict the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif is no more than an isolated report (Khabar Āḥād) in opposition to successive (Mutawātir) readings, which are accepted by the consensus of the Qur'rā' on the grounds of their authenticity in transmission, orthography of the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif and accordance with the Arabic language.

Ibn al-Jazarī states that the readings may differ in various meanings according to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf

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1. Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, pp.76-77.

These variations in meanings do not contradict one another, because it is impossible that contradiction could be found in the Qur'ān which states (S.IV, 82) "Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy."<sup>1</sup>

Goldziher, considers that there are examples of contradiction in the Qur'ān and thinks that S.XXX, 2-4 could be a good example to support his theory. Here he argues that the two readings Ghalabat... Sayughlabūna and Ghulibat... Sayaghlibūna contradict each other, because the victorious according to the former reading are the defeated according to the latter reading. He maintains that most of the Qurra' read in accordance with the former reading,<sup>2</sup> and that the Muslim scholars regarded the victory of the Greeks in 625 A.D. as a miracle of the Prophet, because the event took place according to his prophecy although according to Goldziher it indicates no more than a hope.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, however, the former reading is only attributed to certain companions, <sup>C</sup>Alī, Abū Sa<sup>C</sup>īd al-Khudrī, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abbās and Ibn <sup>C</sup>Umar and among the followers to Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiyah b. Qurrah and al-Hasan.<sup>4</sup> It is not accepted by the consensus of scholars and is thus regarded as shādh. The only authentic reading accepted

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1. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.48.

2. al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah, p.18. c.f. Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī, pp.29-31.

3. ibid.

4. al-Bahr al-Muhīt, vol.VII, p.161, Qurtubī, vol.XIV, p.4.  
and al-Alūsī, Ruh al-Ma<sup>C</sup>ānī, vol.XXI, p.17.

by the Ḥamma and regarded as mutawātir is the latter reading.<sup>1</sup>

The former reading, although it is regarded as shādhah does not in fact contradict the common reading in its meaning if the historical accounts are carefully studied, or as al-Alūsī puts it it is permissible for two readings to differ from each other as regards their meaning provided that they do not contradict one another, and there is no contradiction in a group of people being victorious and defeated at two different times.<sup>2</sup> Thus around the year 615 A.D. the Byzantine Empire was defeated by Persia while Persia was defeated later by the Byzantines around the year 622 A.D. which confirms the common reading:

"The Roman Empire has been defeated in a land close by;  
but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon  
be victorious. Within a few years with God is the  
decision. In the Past and in the Future: on the  
Day Shall the believers rejoice with the help of God.  
He helps whom He will and He is exalted in Might,  
Most Merciful."

As regards the other shādhah reading we find in its support that the Romans after their victory in Syria were defeated by the Muslims in Jordan in 8 A.H. in the battle known as Ghazwat Mu'tah, which was followed by the battle of Yarmūk in 14 A.H.<sup>3</sup>

Finally the prophecy of these Qur'ānic verses is accepted by Muslims as a miracle in their mutawātir reading, irrespective of

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1. al-Bahr al-Muhīt, vol.VII, p.161.

2. al-Alūsī, Ruh al-Maḥānī, vol.XXI, p.17.

3. ibid., and Hammūdah al-Qirā'ātwa-al Lahajāt, p.198.

the interpretation placed upon them by Goldziher. In this connection al-Zamakhsharī asserts that this verse is one of the greatest miracles which bears witness to the trueness of the prophecy of the Prophet and to the fact that the Qur'ān is revealed from God, because it relates knowledge of unseen, which is not known except to God.<sup>1</sup>

The <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and the problem of grammatical or  
orthographical errors

When the maṣāḥif were compiled and brought before <sup>C</sup>Uthmān to look through them, he is reported to have found lahn in certain ahruf but to have told the committee of the maṣāḥif to leave them as they were on the grounds that the Arabs would read them soundly.<sup>2</sup>

According to another version he is reported as having added that if the scribe was from Thaḳīf and the reciter from Hudhayl there would not be any lahn.<sup>3</sup>

However, al-Dānī states that this report is groundless and not acceptable for the following reasons: first its chain is weak, being mursal, and its matn (context) is muḍṭarib.

Secondly it seems impossible that <sup>C</sup>Uthmān who with the agreement of

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1. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.467.

2. al-Dānī, al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.124.

3. ibid., p.125.

the companions compiled the maṣāḥif in order to unite the Muslims and terminate the dispute among them, would have left any lahn or error in the maṣāḥif to be corrected by those who come after him.<sup>1</sup>

Finally al-Dānī argues that if the report is supposed to be authentic, the word lahn means the recitation rather than the orthography, because there are many words which, if they are read according to their orthography in the maṣāḥif, would have a different meaning, for example من نبأ المرسلين، لا أوضعوا، لا أذبحه and سأوريكم الربوا.<sup>2</sup> Uthmān may thus have meant this latter kind which the Arabs would read soundly since the Qur'ān has been revealed in their language.<sup>2</sup>

He goes on to report that when 'Ā'ishah was asked about this lahn she replied that the scribes made a mistake (akhta'ū). The passages in which she considered mistakes to occur are the following:

- a. (S.XX, 63) In ḥadhāni la-Sāḥirāni
- b. (S.IV, 162) Wa-al-muqīmīna al-ṣalāta wa-al-Mūtūna  
al-Zakāta
- c. (S.V, 72) Inna al-ladhīna āmanū wa-al-ladhīna ḥādū  
wa-al-sābi'ūna.<sup>3</sup>

al-Dānī argues that the meaning of this report is that she considered these readings not to be the most fluent and regarded her own ikhtiyār as the best, on the grounds that it is impossible that she could have meant the word akhta'ū literally, since the scribes had written in this way with the consensus of the companions.

1. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, p.124.

2. ibid., pp.124-125.

3. ibid., pp.126-128, al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.IX, p.395 and Muqaddimatān, pp.104-105.

In support of his argument, he quotes certain scholars as having interpreted the statement of <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah as meaning that the scribes made mistakes in choosing the best ahruf among the seven ahruf. According to them lahn means recitation or lughah, as in the statement of <sup>C</sup>Umar "Ubayy Aqra'unā Wa-Innā la-Nada<sup>C</sup>u Ba<sup>C</sup>da Lahnihi" (i.e. Qirā'atihī - his recitation).<sup>1</sup>

The author of Kitāb al-Mabānī<sup>2</sup> attributes to certain scholars the view that <sup>C</sup>Ā'ishah objected to these readings because they did not correspond with the dialect of Quraysh, although they are sound according to the other dialects of the Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

In addition it is said that there are other orthographical errors in the maṣāḥif as follows:

- a. (S.II, 177) Wa-al-mūfūna bi-<sup>C</sup>ʿabdihi idhā <sup>C</sup>āhadū wa-al-ṣābirīna
- b. (S.LXIII, 10) Fa-aṣṣaddaqa wa-akun min al-ṣālihīn
- c. (S.XXI, 3) Wa-asarrū al-najwā al-ladhīna ḡalamū<sup>4</sup>

However, al-Ṭabarī supports the authenticity of all the examples mentioned above according to various Arab dialects,<sup>5</sup> and states that if they had been written wrongly in the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, we would have found all earlier maṣāḥif disagreeing with the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, whereas <sup>C</sup>Ubayy is reported as having agreed in his reading maṣāḥif.

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1. al-Muqni<sup>C</sup>, pp.127-128.

2. Included in Muqaddimatān, edited by A. Jeffery, Cairo 1954.

3. ibid., p.115.

4. ibid., p.104.

5. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.III, p.352-54 and vol.IX, p.394-97.



and muṣḥaf with the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. For example in (S.IV, 162) Wa-al-Muqīmīna al-Ṣalāta wa-al-Mūtūna al-Zakāta is found in the muṣḥaf of <sup>ʿ</sup>Ubayy in the same way as in the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. al-Ṭabarī concludes that the agreement of the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif with that of Ubayy indicates that what is in our maṣāḥif today is sound and not wrong, and that if in fact there had been mistakes in the orthography of the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif the companions would not have taught their followers except in the correct manner. Finally, he states that the transmission by the Muslims of these readings in accordance with their orthography as found in the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif is the strongest evidence for their correctness and soundness and that this is nothing to do with the scribes and one should not attribute to them any mistake in writing.<sup>1</sup>

The scribes of the <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif are reported to have differed as to whether the word ḥaḥ should be written with final tā' or hā'. <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmān is said to have commanded them to write it with final tā' according to the Qurashī dialect on the grounds that the Qur'ān has been revealed in their dialect.<sup>2</sup>

Since the scribes used to consult <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthmān whenever they differed in writing certain words and he used to correct them it seems very difficult to believe that he found certain cases of lahn in the ahruf of the Qur'ān and left it to the people to correct it in their readings.

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.IX, pp.397-398.

2. Bukhārī, vol.VI, p.479.

If he had told the scribes to leave alleged lahn to be corrected by the Arabs, it seems reasonable to suppose that he would have done the same thing with the word التابوت

Furthermore the author of Kitāb al-Mabānī<sup>1</sup> studies all examples mentioned above and substantiates their acceptability as good Arabic according to various Arab dialects, quoting in support of each example many lines of Ancient Arabic poetry.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the authenticity of the examples mentioned above from the linguistic point of view, we shall examine the views of the commentators on each example in detail:

1. Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubaydah is reported as having stated about the muṣḥaf of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān concerning S.XX, 63 ان هذ ن لسرن that it was with omission of alif, being marfū<sup>C</sup>, and that the scribes used to add yā' in cases of naṣb and khaḍ.<sup>3</sup> This Qur'ānic passage is read in variant accepted readings which we shall mention with their different i<sup>C</sup>rāb and interpretations as follows:

- a. In Hādhāni La-Sāḥirāni being attributed to Ḥafṣ the rāwī of <sup>C</sup>Āsim.
  - b. In Hādhāni la-Sāḥirānni being attributed to Ibn Kathīr.<sup>4</sup>
- Both of these readings read ان as in

In both of these cases hādhāni is muḥtada' and its khavar is la-sāḥirāni or la-sāḥirānni.

1. Muqaddimatān, edited by A. Jeffery, Cairo, 1954.

2. ibid., pp.104-116.

3. al-Bahr al-Muḥīt, vol.VI, p.255.

4. ibid., and al-Nashr, vol.II, pp.320-321.

Secondly Inna Hādhāni la-Sāhirāni. This reading is read by <sup>C</sup>āmmah of the Qurra'. It is attributed to Nāfi<sup>C</sup>, Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir, Shu<sup>C</sup>bah (another rawī of Ḥafṣ), Ḥamzah, al-Kisā'ī Abū Ja<sup>C</sup>far, Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb and Khalaf.<sup>1</sup>

The grammarians suggested various kinds of i<sup>C</sup>rāb and interpretations for this reading as follows:

- a. It is ḍamīr al-sha<sup>C</sup>n with the -hu omitted, and is to be understood as meaning innahu hādhāni... This view is regarded as weak. In support of this interpretation <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr is reported as having said: Inna Wa-Rākibahā to a poet who said to him La<sup>C</sup>ana Allāhu Nāqatan Ḥamalatnī Ilayka.<sup>2</sup>
- b. It is said that inna in this context means na<sup>C</sup>am<sup>3</sup> and that hādhāni is muḥtada' and its ḵabar is La-sāhirani (attributed to al-Mubarrid, Ismā<sup>C</sup>īl b. Ishāq and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Akhfash al-Ṣaghīr).
- c. Abū Ḥayyān attributes to certain Arabs the use of the dual of this word with alif in all cases. He counts those who use this form among the Arabs as: Kinānah, Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b, Khath<sup>C</sup>am, Zabīd and the people of that region, Banū al-Anbār, Banū Hajīm, Murād and <sup>C</sup>Udhrah. Abū Ḥayyān considers this as the best explanation of this reading.<sup>4</sup>

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1. al-Nashr, vol.II, p.321.

2. Muqaddimatān, p.111.

3. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, p.255.

4. ibid.

al-Zamakhsharī similarly states that certain Arabs treat the alif of the dual as Alif Maqṣūrah (i.e. invariable).<sup>1</sup> The author of Muqaddimat Kitāb al-Mabānī<sup>2</sup> claims that Quraysh adopted this form from Banū al-Hārith. He says of this latter tribe that they say Akramtu al-Rajulāni, Rakibtu al-Farasāni, and Nazartu Ilā al-ʿAbdāni. He reports al-Farrā' as having narrated on the authority of a man belonging to al-Azd on the authority of certain people of Banū al-Hārith that they recited the saying of al-Mutalammis as follows:

Fa'Aṭraqa Iṭraqa al-Shujāʿi Wa-law Ra'ā

Masāghan linābāhu al-Shujāʿ laṣammamā

and that Banū al-Hārith say:- Hādhā Khaṭṭu Yadā Akhī Aʿrifuhū.

He attributes to them also this poetic verse:- Inna Abāhā wa-Abā Abāhā Qad Balaghā fī al-Majdi Ghayatāhā.<sup>3</sup>

Finally Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlā' is reported as having read Inna Hādhayni la-Sāhirāni. This reading, however, Abū Ḥayyān reports al-Zajjāj as having objected to on the grounds that it did not correspond with the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif.<sup>4</sup>

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1. al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.72.

2. Included in Muqaddimatān.

3. Muqaddimatān, p.109.

4. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, p.255.

2. (S.IV, 162) Wa-al-muqīmīna al-ṣalāta wa-al-mūtūna al-zakāta

The word al-Muqīmīn is written and read with naṣb being the naṣb of praise while according to Sībawayh al-Muqīmīn is in khafd being in opposition to the word minhum.<sup>1</sup> al-Zamakhsharī states that no attention should be paid to the claim that there is an orthographical error, here or elsewhere. This claim, he says, is only made by those who do not know the various ways the Arabs use in their language. He argues that the salaf who were known for their wide knowledge, their virtues and their vigorous support of Islam, could not possibly have left any defect in the muṣḥaf to be corrected by the following generation.<sup>2</sup>

3. (S.V, 69) Inna al-ladhīna āmanū wa-al-ladhīna hādū wa-al-Ṣabi'ūna Wa-al-Naṣārā

The word al-Ṣabi'ūna is written and read with raf<sup>C</sup> being a muḥtada' whose ḵabar is omitted, which may be understood as meaning Inna al-ladhīna āmanū w-al-ladhīna hādū wa-al-naṣārā ḵukmuhum kadhā wa-al-ṣābi'ūna kadhālika.

al-Zamakhsharī quotes Sībawayh in support as having quoted the example: Wa-illā Fa' <sup>C</sup>iamū annā wa-antum bughātun mā baqīna fī Shiqāqi meaning fa' <sup>C</sup>iamū annā bughātun wa-antum kadhālika.<sup>3</sup>

4. (S.II, 177) Wa-al-mūfūna bī-<sup>C</sup>ahdihim Idhā <sup>C</sup>āhadū wa-al-ṣābirīna  
The word al-Ṣābirīn is read with naṣb as it is written in the maṣāḥif, as being regarded as a naṣb of distinction and praise.<sup>4</sup> al-Ṭabarī

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1. al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.590.

2. ibid.

3. ibid., pp.660-661.

4. ibid., p.220.

states that this form is found in the Arabic language and quotes in support certain lines.<sup>1</sup>

5. (S.LXII, 10) Fa-aṣṣaddaqa wa-akun min al-ṣāliḥīn

The word akun is read with jazm as found in the maṣāḥif as being dependent on the phrase law Lā akkhartanī, as though the sentence were: In akkhartanī aṣṣaddaq wa-akun...<sup>2</sup>

6. Abū Ḥayyān states that various kinds of i<sup>C</sup>rāb, raf<sup>C</sup>, naṣb and khafd are suggested for al-Ladhīna Ḍalamū in the Qur'ānic passage (S.XXI, 3) Wa-asarrū al-najwā al-ladhīna Ḍalamū; they are as follows:

Firstly, raf<sup>C</sup>, with various interpretations;

- a. It is badal (permutative) of the noun of asarrū
- b. It is the agent (fā<sup>C</sup>il) belonging to the verb Ḍalamū while wa-asarrū only indicates the plural.

According to this interpretation it would be an example of lughat akalūnī al-barāghīth. This latter interpretation is regarded by certain unnamed scholars as being lughah shādhah, but according to certain others it is lughah ḥasanah, being attributed to lughat Azd Shanū'ah. This is supported by a similar passage in the Qur'ān (S.V,71) Thumma <sup>C</sup>amū wa-ṣammū kathīrun minhum and a poetic verse attributed to a poet among Azd Shanū'ah:  
Yalūmūnanī fi'shtirā'i al-nakhīli ahī  
wakulluhumū alwamu.

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1. al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.III, pp.352-353.

2. al-Kashshāf, vol.IV, p.544.

- c. According to certain other grammarians al-Ladhīna is mubtada' and its khavar is Wa-Asarrū al-Najwā.
- d. Or al-Ladhīna is fā<sup>C</sup>il and its fi<sup>C</sup>l is omitted, being understood from the passage; it may be reckoned to be for example Yaqūlu or Asarraḥā.
- e. According to certain others al-Ladhīna is khavar and its mubtada', which is hum, is omitted.

Secondly, it is suggested that the i<sup>C</sup>rāb of al-Ladhīna is naṣb either to indicate blame or with the word a<sup>C</sup>nī understood.

Finally, it is suggested that the i<sup>C</sup>rāb of al-Ladhīna is khafd, on the assumption that it is an attributive of the word li-aḥ-nāsi in the first verse, or that it is badal of this word.

However Abū Ḥayyān regards this as far-fetched (Ab<sup>C</sup>ad al-Aqwāl<sup>1</sup>) while al-Zamakhsharī does not mention it at all.<sup>2</sup>

Since the text of the Qur'ān allows variant readings according to the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf, and since therefore the language of the Qur'ān being the common literary language of the Arabs includes various Arab dialects there should have been no dispute among the philologists and the grammarians concerning any reading corresponding with one of the Arab dialects.

In fact, however many of them are reported as having objected to certain authentic readings only on the grounds that they do not correspond with the most fluent Arabic or because they are according to them strange or wrong or uncommon in use.

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1. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, pp.296-297.

2. al-Kashshāf, vol.III, p.102.

The grammatical schools of Baṣrah and Kūfah differed in their views concerning the authenticity and acceptability of certain readings only because they did not correspond with their analogies or to their criteria of fluency for the various Arab dialects.<sup>1</sup>

The scholars of the Kūfan school are in fact said to have respected and accepted the Qirā'āt more than the Baṣran, although we may find among the Kūfans themselves a few cases in which they object to certain accepted readings. In this connection we may refer to a Kūfan grammarian who is at the same time a Qāri', al-Kisā'ī. He is reported as having objected to the reading of the Ḍammah in (S.LVIII, 11) Qad sami<sup>Ḍ</sup>a with the izhār of dāl in qad, preferring his own Ikhtiyār with idghām, (i.e. qas-sami<sup>Ḍ</sup>a)<sup>2</sup> and al-Farrā' is reported as having refuted the reading of Ibn <sup>Ḍ</sup>Amir in S.VI, 137.<sup>3</sup>

The scholars of the Baṣran school are known to have raised more objections to certain linguistic features in the readings even if they were as highly esteemed as the seven canonical readers of Ibn Mujāhid. In this respect we may mention Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī who denied the scholarship of the Kūfan Qurrah and grammarians.<sup>4</sup> He was followed by his student al-Mubarriḍ who went to exaggerated

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1. Maḍrasat al-Kūfah, p.337.

2. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VIII, p.232.

3. Ma<sup>Ḍ</sup>ānī al-Qur'ān, vol.I, pp.357-358, and see pp.263-65 below.

4. Marātib al-Nahwiyyīn, p.26.



lengths in rejecting any reading which did not correspond with his Baṣran analogy.<sup>1</sup> For example he objects to the reading of Ḥamzah in (S.IV, 1) Wa' ttaqū Allāha 'l-Ladhī Tasā'alūna bihī Wa'l-Arhāmi with khafḍ in al-Arhāmi<sup>2</sup> while the majority read it with naṣb.<sup>3</sup> al-Qurṭubī reports al-Mubarrid as having said that if he had heard any imām reading thus according to the reading of Ḥamzah, he would have certainly left him and gone away.<sup>4</sup>

However, both ways of reading are accepted among the Qurra' and the reading of Ḥamzah with khafḍ is accepted as fluent Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

In fact the philologists and the grammarians agree in theory that the Qurra' follow the sunnah in their ikhtiyār and that their readings correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and agree with the Arabic language. In this respect Ibn Jinnī supports certain readings although he sometimes cannot find any linguistic evidence in their support, but he accepts them on the grounds that the Qāri' must have heard it and that he could not have read freely without relying on the riwāyah.<sup>6</sup>

However they failed to apply their theory in practice consistently, including Ibn Jinnī himself who, following his Baṣran school, objects to certain authentic readings.<sup>7</sup>

1. <sup>C</sup>Uḍaymah, ed., int., al-Muqtaḍab, vol.I, p.111.

2. al-Kāmil, vol.III, p.39.

3. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.III, p.157.

4. Tafsīr, vol.V, p.2.

5. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.III, p.157. For more information see pp.262-3 below.

6. al-Muḥtasib, vol.I, pp.85-86, vol.II, pp.27 and 252.

7. al-Muḥtasib, vol.I, pp.240-243 and al-Khaṣā'is, vol.I, pp.72-73.

In fact we find this phenomenon even among certain Qurra' who themselves are reported to have objected to certain accepted readings. In this connection we may mention Abū <sup>C</sup>Ubayd and al-Zajjāj who are reported to have expressed their objection to the reading in (S.XIV, 22) of Wa-mā antum bi-muṣṛikhiyyi with khafḍ as opposed to bi-muṣṛikhiyya.<sup>1</sup> Abu <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al<sup>C</sup>Alā' is also reported as having objected to the reading of Hamzah in (S.XVIII, 44) Hunālika al-wilāyatu and (S.VIII, 72) Mālakum min wilāyatihim as opposed to the commoner al-walāyatu and walāyatihim, regarding the former as lahn.<sup>2</sup> Likewise Hārūn al-A<sup>C</sup>war is reported as having objected to the reading of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir in (S.XIX, 42) yā-ābata which according to him is lahn as opposed to yā abati.<sup>3</sup>

We shall next quote some examples in which the grammarians objected to certain accepted readings among the seven distinguished readings, and then examine them and substantiate their authenticity and acceptability in the Arabic language with references to their origins among the various Arab dialects:

- a. In (S.XIV, 22) the common reading is Wa-mā antum bimūṣṛikhiyya with naṣb of the final yā' while Hamzah, one of the seven distinguished Qurra' read bi-muṣṛikhiyyi. al-Zamakhsharī considers this latter reading weak.<sup>4</sup>

1. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.V, p.419.

2. al-Nashr, vol.II, p.277 and al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, p.130.

3. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.VI, p.193.

4. al-Kashshāf, vol.II, p.551.

Abū Ḥayyān reports certain philologists and grammarians as having rejected this latter reading, but he opposes this and states that the reading is authentic and that it is sound Arabic, though rare, being attributed to the dialect of the Banū Yarbū<sup>C</sup>. He quotes Quṭrub and certain other authorities in support of this.<sup>1</sup>

In (S.IV, 1) the common reading is Wa' ttaqū Allāha 'l-Ladhī Tasa'alūna bihi Wa'l-Arḥāma, while it is read by Ḥamzah being attributed also to al-Nakha<sup>C</sup>ī, Qatādah and al-A<sup>C</sup>mash, as arḥāmi.<sup>2</sup> Certain grammarians object to this latter reading on the grounds that it is not sound Arabic and leading Baṣran grammarians do not accept this form.<sup>3</sup> Abū Ḥayyān, however, supports this reading on the grounds of its authenticity and the fluency of its Arabic, as there are various examples in Arabic prose and poetry which support this. He states that the Kūfan school which accepts this form and supports it is correct, and that the Baṣrans are not right in their objection to this form.<sup>4</sup>

In addition Abū Ḥayyān studies the transmission of the latter reading and asserts that it is a successive reading and has been received from the Prophet in the manner of tawātur and that

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1. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.V, p.420.

2. ibid., vol.III, p.157.

3. ibid., and al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.462, al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.III, pp.519-520 and al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.III, p.158.

4. ibid., pp.158-159.

Ḥamzah has not read any ḥarf in the Qur'ān except with athar. He concludes that it is not necessary to follow in the Arabic language either the Baṣran school or any other for there are many things in Arabic which are transmitted only by the Kūfans and many others only transmitted by the Baṣrans.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī mentions of Ḥamzah that he was the chief Qārī' of Kūfah after <sup>C</sup>Āṣim and al-Āmash and that he was reliable, knowledgable in the Qur'ān, the Arabic language and other fields of Islamic studies and a devout man.<sup>2</sup> He elsewhere states that Ḥamzah has not read a single ḥarf except with athar.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir, one of the seven canonical Qurra', is reported as having read (S.VI, 137) Wa-Kadhālika Zuyyina Likathīrin Min al-Mushrikīna Qatlu Awlādahum Shurakā'ihim, while the common reading of the people of Hijāz and Iraq is Wa-Kadhālika Zayyana likathīrin Min al-Mushrikīn Qatla Awlādihi Shurakā'uhum<sup>4</sup> which means "Even so, in the eyes of most of the pagans, their 'partners' made alluring the slaughter of their children". al-Zamakhsharī objects to the former reading in which Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir read qatlu with raf<sup>C</sup>, awlādahum with naṣb and shurakā'ihim with khafḍ on the grounds that it is not fluent and should not be used in the language of the Qur'ān. He maintains that Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmir read in this way because he saw the word shurakā'ihim in certain maṣāḥif with yā' as شركا بهم.<sup>5</sup>

1. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.III, p.159

2. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.166.

3. Ghāyat al-Nihāyah, vol.I, p.263.

4. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.IV, p.229.

5. al-Kashshāf, vol.II, p.70.

However, Ibn al-Munayyir refutes this allegation of al-Zamakhsharī and supports the reading of Ibn ʿĀmir on the grounds that it has been transmitted with tawātur. He objects to al-Zamakhsharī's idea that the Qurra' of the seven readings used to read optionally or simply followed the orthography of the maṣāḥif without relying on riwāyah.<sup>1</sup>

Abū Ḥayyān discusses and supports the reading of Ibn ʿĀmir and says that certain grammarians accept this form in Arabic, although the majority of the Baṣran school reject it except in the case of poetical licence. He asserts that Ibn ʿĀmir's reading is correct on the grounds that it has been transmitted in the manner of tawātur and is attributed to a fluent Arab, Ibn ʿĀmir, who received it from ʿUthmān before the appearance of lahn in the tongue of the Arabs, and that there are many verses of poetry in support of this form.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī refers to Ibn ʿĀmir as a great Imām, respected follower and prominent scholar who led prayers in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus during the reign of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and who was also the chief qādī and qārī and that his reading is accepted with the consensus of the salaf.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī points out that the Iʿrāb of the Ḥadīth Fa-Haḷ Antum Tārikū Lī Aṣḥābī agrees with that of the

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1. al-Intiṣāf, with al-Kashshāf, vol.II, p.69.

2. al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, vol.IV, p.229.

3. al-Nashr, vol.I, p.114.

reading of Ibn <sup>C</sup>Āmīr since in the latter passage the mudāf and the mudāf ilayhi are separated by a prepositional phrase, while in the former they are separated by the direct object.<sup>1</sup>

The grammar of the Arabic language should perhaps have been based on the whole Arabic literature in its various dialects and the Qur'ānic readings should have been accepted and used in the construction of Arabic grammar, but the grammarians opted for the opposite when they rejected certain Qirā'āt because they differed from their analogy or the common rule.

al-Rāzī objects to this procedure and states that we quite regularly find the grammarians in a dilemma concerning certain Qur'ānic words as regards how to support their fluency and acceptability, and that when they find an unknown poetic line they become happy. He comments that this practice is very surprising to him and that whereas they regard this unknown poetic line as an indication of the correctness of the Qur'ānic words, the right method would have been the opposite, i.e. to authenticate the words of the poetic lines on the grounds that they are found in the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

The grammarians in fact could not deal with all the constructions found in the Qur'ān and its readings. <sup>C</sup>Udaymah finds that there are examples in which they objected to certain possible kinds of i<sup>C</sup>rāb

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1. Fath al-Bārī, vol.VII, p.25f.

2. al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol.III, p.193.

although they are found in the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> He adds that they used to object to any reading if it did not correspond with their analogy or if they could not find substantiation for it according to their knowledge, or if it did not agree with what is in common use, or because of their misunderstanding of certain Qirā'āt although they are successive readings and are in accordance with their analogy.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we may say that ikhtiyār was not left to the free choice of the individual, but depended upon the three conditions for acceptability discussed above. It was in no way dependent upon the orthography of the maṣāḥif or to do with the fact that they were undotted and unvocalised, and although accepted readings may differ in meaning, they do not contradict one another. Since the Qur'ān was revealed in seven ahruf, all of them good Arabic, there is little point in rejecting any of them on grammatical grounds. In practice some grammarians, particularly those of Baṣrah, may have rejected certain accepted readings on the grounds of their analogy, but despite this these readings are valid on the basis of other dialects, and other grammarians have accepted them.

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1. <sup>c</sup>Uḍaymah, Dirāsāt Li-Uṣlūb al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, vol.I, pp.5-13.

2. ibid., pp.22-25.

## CONCLUSION



## CONCLUSION

Coming to the final conclusion we may review briefly the main issues discussed in the seven chapters of this thesis.

Firstly the Qur'ān has been revealed in seven ahruf. It is concluded that the phenomenon of differences among the companions apparently took place after the Hijrah in Madīnah, when the number of Muslims from various tribes increased, and that the ahruf were intended to facilitate the reading of the Qur'ān among them.

The ahādīth which substantiate the revelation of the Qur'ān in seven ahruf are regarded as sound and successive (mutawātir).

The term seven ahruf means seven linguistical variations reflecting various dialects of the Arabs in ways of recitation of the Qur'ān.

The Prophet used to have certain scribes to write down what was revealed to him in verses or portions on materials available at the time to aid the memories of the companions, among whom were a considerable number who had committed to heart the entire Qur'ān or some parts of it, certain of them having their own codices. The Qur'ān was thus preserved in the heart of the Qurra' as well as in book form.

The first development in the field was that Abū Bakr gathered the Qur'ān from its suhuf and different materials as it had been transmitted from the Prophet, and compiled them in the muṣhaf. The word muṣhaf denotes the entire text of the Qur'ān and this title was

given to the Qur'ān during the lifetime of the Prophet. It is an ancient Arabic word used in pre-Islamic poetry.

The next step was the compilation of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, who copied maṣāḥif from the mushaf of Abū Bakr and distributed them to the metropolitan cities accompanied by distinguished Qurra' to teach the people accordingly, in order to unite them and put an end to disputes among the people in the encampments, the amṣār and in Madīnah itself; hence he destroyed the personal codices. The arrangement of the sūras as well as the verses in the <sup>C</sup>Uthmanic maṣāḥif is shown by many sound reports to be based on the revelation as they were found in the original supported by their transmission from the Prophet.

The problem of Naskh is studied with the two episodes of the gharānīq and the scribe of whom it is said that he used to make alteration in the fawāṣil, the verse endings of the Qur'ān, and as a result the completeness and trustworthiness of the Qur'ān has been demonstrated, there being nothing missing or which used to be read and was abrogated by Naskh al-Tilāwah either with or without ḥukm.

As regards the relation between the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif and the seven ahruf, the most acceptable two opinions among the scholars are that the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif accommodate either all or a certain unspecified number of the ahruf which correspond with the orthography of the <sup>C</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif, which include what is transmitted by Tawātur but not Āḥād readings attributed to certain personal codices and transmitted to us in unauthentic chains. The maṣāḥif were

recorded in one ḥarf with the permission of reciting in seven ahruf.

The additional interpolations attributed to the personal codices are found to be their own explanations and interpretations. They all generally are isolated reports (Akhbār Āḥād), dubious or rejected.

The accounts alleging that Ubayy added to his muṣḥaf the du<sup>ḥ</sup>ā' of al-Qunūt as one or two sūras and that Ibn Mas<sup>ḥ</sup>ūd denied al-Fāṭiḥah and al-Mu<sup>ḥ</sup>awwidhatayn are to be regarded as unauthentic.

The <sup>ḥ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif remained unchanged, without vocalisation or dottings, for they used to be read soundly according to the riwāyah and teaching of the Qurṛā'. The former was introduced by Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī due to the appearance of Lahn because of the overwhelming numbers of non-Arabs in <sup>ḥ</sup>Irāq, and the second was done by the students of Abū al-Aswad at the request of al-Ḥajjāj during the reign of <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.

The signs of vocalisation and dottings were further developed with the adoption of the ḥarakāt of al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad and have remained unchanged since then. What can be attributed to al-Ḥajjāj is no more than the introduction of Naqt al-I<sup>ḥ</sup>jām into the <sup>ḥ</sup>Uthmānic maṣāḥif. Thus no alteration or recension of the maṣāḥif was introduced by him, and the printed maṣāḥif of the present day represent the received text of the Qur'ān without alteration.

The language in which the Qur'ān has been revealed is studied in ancient sources as well as in modern linguistical studies to investigate the views of the scholars. It is found that the text of

the Qur'ān reflects the influence of various dialects of the Arabs. The views of the scholars who interpret the seven ahruf as seven dialects of the Arabs differed in their identification, as to whether the seven dialects belong entirely to Quraysh or to the most fluent dialects of all the Arabs, and they differed according to their criteria for fluency. An attempt is made to distinguish between lughah and lahjah in ancient sources and modern studies.

The language of the Qur'ān is concluded to represent the common spoken literary language of the Arabs which is based on all their dialects with a predominance of Qurashī features.

The origin of Qirā'āt is investigated and it is concluded that they go back to the teaching of the Prophet, for we find that every companion when he differed in readings with someone used to say that the Prophet had taught him this way. The following generation taught the Qur'ān accordingly. Any accepted reading is found to have corresponded with the conditions governing accepted readings, while any reading which does not correspond with them or any one of them is regarded as shādh, dubious or completely unaccepted. The development of these conditions is studied. The theory of reading the Qur'ān in accordance with the meaning is shown to be groundless and as the Qurra' used to teach their students according to the conditions governing them and as they received the Qirā'ah from the companions who were taught it from the Prophet, bearing in mind the fact that the companions whenever they differed in reading would refer their reading to the Prophet or come to him to arbitrate between them.

The first compilers of Qirā'āt used to compile a certain unspecified number of Qirā'āt. Ibn Mujāhid was the first who introduced the seven readings of the seven Qurra' of the distinguished Aṣṣār, regarding the other readings as shādh. In choosing this specific number, although it corresponded to the number of ahruf, he never intended to confuse the seven ahruf with his seven readings.

The seven readings compiled by Ibn Mujāhid were adopted in the Aṣṣār and dominated the circles of the Qurra', although another three readings in addition to Ibn Mujāhid's al-Sabʿah were supported and strongly argued to have the same position as his seven. In this connection we list a quite considerable number of books composed on the subject.

Ikhtiyār in reading, which is the selection of one reading (or more rather than another or others), is next considered. The Qurra' do not have free hand in this, because any reading should be subject to correspondence with riwāyah, the orthography of the maṣāḥif and the Arabic language. The emphasis is made to substantiate the fact that there are no grammatical or orthographical errors in the ʿUthmānic maṣāḥif. The Qurra' when they select certain readings support their choice by mentioning the reasons behind their preference or opting for a certain ikhtiyār, but without objecting to the other accepted readings.

Although the philologists and grammarians agreed theoretically that any reading agreeing with the conditions for accepted readings should not be objected to, in practice they disagreed on the degree of

fluency required, and certain of them objected to some authentic and highly esteemed readings. We have studied certain examples to conclude that they are accepted readings on the grounds of their sound transmission, fluency and correspondence with various Arab dialects.

Finally, although the sound readings may differ in meaning they do not contradict each other, and the orthography of the maṣāḥif preserves the authentic readings which are subject to the riwāyah and the orthography itself does not initiate or create any readings.

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